E: Playdell Jnr

THE

MIDNIGHT BELL,

A GERMAN STORY.

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MIDNIGHT BELL,

A GERMAN STORY,

FOUNDED ON INCIDENTS IN REAL LIFE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

A round unvarnish'd tale. OTHELLO.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR H. D. SYMONDS, NO. 20, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

1798.

THE MIDNIGHT BELL.

CHAP. X.

Beneath a mountain's brow, the moſt remote
And inacceſſible, by ſhepherds trod,
In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
A hermit liv'd; a melancholy man.

HOME.

STUNNED by the fall, Lauretta lay a length of time amidſt the ruins, inſenſible of her ſituation, till reaſon, beginning again to dawn, brought along with it a recollection of the accident that had befallen her. The tempeſt was abated, but it ſtill rained violently: her head and right ſide were much bruiſed, and her left arm was burnt by the

lightning: but, having fortunately dropped upon the wet earth, her body had ſuſtained no other material injury. She lifted up her head, and caſt her eyes around; but the twilight, obſcured by the thick rain, was inſufficient to ſhow her any object but the ruined turret cloſe by which ſhe lay.

Reſolved, however, if poſſible, to profit by an opportunity which ſeemed providentially given her for effecting her eſcape, ſhe with difficulty raiſed herſelf upon her feet, and, although very weak, ſhe determined to proceed from the caſtle as quickly as ſhe was able, hoping perchance to arrive at ſome convent before ſhe was miſſed—at leaſt could be overtaken—by her guards, who had probably not heard the fall of the turret.

She had proceeded nearly a league with-

out ſtopping, when the dawn of day, beginning to break, ſhowed her that ſhe was entering upon the precincts of a wood. The ground over which ſhe had paſſed was heathy and uneven: — heated and panting for breath, ſhe ſupported herſelf againſt the trunk of the firſt tree; her head ached violently; her arm and ſide were extremely painful, and her garments, drenched with the continued rain, clung round her, dripping with water. The inaction of a few moments produced a ſhivering chillneſs leſs tolerable than the fatigue of proceeding, and ſhe again endeavoured to walk; but exhauſted nature ſupported her trembling frame only a few paces, ere ſhe ſunk upon the rough ground: no proſpect but that of a lingering death, or again falling into the hands of Kroonzer and his companion, now preſented itſelf to her melancholy view: a flood of tears came to

the relief of her full heart; ſhe cloſed her eyes, and ſobbed bitterly.

In this ſituation ſhe had lain a conſiderable time, when ſhe heard a voice articulate ſome words which ſhe underſtood not. She raiſed her dim eyes, and beheld ſtanding by her ſide a hermit of a benign aſpect and venerable mien, on whoſe arm hung a flagon, and in whoſe hand was a ſtaff, on which he ſupported his aged limbs.

"Praiſed be the ſaints!" cried he, as Lauretta opened her eyes, "I am deceived; I thought thee dead." Lauretta extended her feeble hand, which the hermit taking in his, knelt down by her ſide. "My ſtrength is waſting faſt," ſaid Lauretta. After a ſhort pauſe, ſhe added, "Kind heaven hath ſent thee to cloſe my dying eyes."

"Rather do thou hope," returned the hermit, "it hath ſent me to ſuccour thee from death: thy nature ſeems exhauſted with fatigue; let me conduct thee to my cell hard by, and truſt to providence and my endeavours to renovate thy ſtrength."

"Alas, father!" replied Lauretta, "I fear I cannot reach it; I am too faint to walk."

"Let me entreat thee to eſſay it," cried the hermit.—The old man was feeble, and it required his utmoſt exertions to aſſiſt Lauretta in riſing from the ground: he then put the ſtaff into her right hand; and, encircling her waiſt with his arm, he held the other arm in his, and thus led her tottering ſteps through a winding path to his rude cell.

Having ſeated her on a bench covered with moſs, the hermit laid a faggot and ſome dried leaves on the hearth; and, having kindled them, he warmed a ſmall quantity of a reſtorative cordial he poſſeſſed, and gave it to Lauretta to drink. Somewhat revived by the medicine ſhe had ſwallowed, the old man placed her before the fire, and, having given her a ſkin mantle, he left her to exchange her wet garments, whilſt he went to fill his flagon at a neighbouring ſpring; which had been his errand abroad when he diſcovered Lauretta, but which he had left unaccompliſhed.

On his return, he found his fair gueſt in ſome meaſure refreſhed, but ſtill weak and ill. She complained much of the bruiſes on her head and ſide, and her arm alſo was extremely painful:—to this the hermit

applied an aſſuaſive balm; and, having given her a healing balſam with which to anoint her head and ſide, he conducted her into the inner diviſion of his cell; and, having recommended to her to compoſe herſelf to ſleep on his ſtraw pallet, he left her to repoſe, whilſt he broke his own faſt in the outward diviſion of his humble dwelling.

Soft ſleep quickly viſited the couch of Lauretta, and ſhe embraced it as a friend whoſe careſſes ſhe was unwilling to forego; for ſhe roſe not till mid-day had been ſome hours gone by.

The kind hermit had baked for her ſome apples on his hearth; and of theſe, together with ſome brown bread, ſhe made a ſufficient repaſt, and drank plenteouſly of the water from the ſpring.

Lauretta's ſpirits returning with her ſtrength, ſhe voluntarily gratified the hermit's curioſity in regard to ſuch particulars as led to account for the ſituation in which he had found her.

"A veil of myſtery," cried the old man, as Lauretta ended her account, "has many years clouded that caſtle. The coward peaſantry report it to be the reſidence of ſpirits: your words confirm me in the ſuſpicion I have long entertained, that it is infeſted by a banditti. The caſtle formerly belonged to the family of Byroff, whoſe circumſtances falling into decay, they have left this country; and their once ſtately manſion is now mouldering into a pile of ruins."

"Have they ever committed any depredations hereabout?" aſked Lauretta.

"Never," anſwered the hermit. "If they are robbers, as I conjecture, caution would doubtleſs teach them not to aſſail the paſſenger near their haunt, leſt it ſhould be detected. But let us hope that the baron Smaldart, whom you repreſent as your friend, will find ſome meaſure for bringing them under the laſh of juſtice."

"But how came Theodore connected with them?" ſaid Lauretta.

"Time will develop that myſtery," replied the venerable man: and he added, "However artifice may for a while conceal his guilt, reſt aſſured that providence in its own time will expoſe the machinations of the wicked, and turn their evil actions on themſelves."

"The will of heaven be done," cried Lauretta. "But let me entreat your aſſiſtance in deviſing ſome method for my returning to my huſband."

"We muſt be cautious in our ſteps," ſaid the hermit, "leſt they lead to the diſcovery of your retreat, and you again ſhould fall into the power of your malicious enemies."

"By your counſel I will be guided," replied Lauretta.

"Thus then I adviſe," anſwered the ſolitary man. "I will provide thee with implements for writing unto whomſoever it ſhall beſt ſuit thy purpoſe; and on the morrow I will ſeek a truſty peaſant, reſiding on the ſkirts of this foreſt, who ſhall convey

what thou haſt written to the baron Smaldart; and he may then concert ſome meaſure for thy ſafe return to thy huſband."

Lauretta gladly adopted this propoſal; and, having addreſſed a brief account of her ſufferings and preſent concealment to her beloved Alphonſus, ſhe incloſed it in a cover directed to the baron; ſhe then drank a ſecond cup of the cordial prepared for her by the hermit, and again retired to his pallet, which he kindly inſiſted on reſigning for her accommodation, having prepared for himſelf a bed of dried moſs and leaves in the outward part of his cell.

Early in the morning Lauretta aroſe, with a heart lighter than ſhe had for ſome time felt it; and, having joined her kind hoſt in his accuſtomed devotions, they ſat down to

an humble repaſt, and the hermit then ſallied forth in ſearch of the peaſant who was to be Lauretta's meſſenger to the caſtle of Smaldart.

On his departure, Lauretta again habited herſelf in her own garments, which a conſtant fire had now rendered fit for wearing; and, not daring to venture without the cell, ſhe ſat ruminating on her happy and unexpected eſcape from her priſon, and anticipating the pleaſure of again beholding her Alphonſus.

The hermit, on returning, informed her that the peaſant had willingly undertaken the journey; and that, in about five days, ſhe might expect the arrival of her huſband, or at leaſt to receive ſome intelligence of him by the return of the meſſenger.

Lauretta expreſſed to him her gratitude for his kindneſs in the warmeſt terms; but he ſilenced her by obſerving that what he had done was but the debt of man to man, and that it were better not to know than not to perform it. She raiſed her hands to heaven, in thankfulneſs for the kind protector ſhe had found; and at the ſame time dropped a tear for the ſorrows of her Alphonſus.

In the courſe of that day, Lauretta ventured to inquire of her venerable hoſt, what could have induced him, who, from his knowledge of the world, and the exalted ſentiments of his heart, ſeemed to be ſo well calculated for the offices of ſociety, to have ſecluded himſelf from all intercourſe with men.

"Canſt thou, daughter," he replied, "at-

tend with patience to the tale of a care-worn old man?"

Lauretta immediately expreſſed her anxious wiſh to be made acquainted with the hiſtory of her newly-gained friend.

The hermit heaved a ſigh, and thus began.

CHAP. XI.

When ſorrows come, they come not ſingle ſpies,
But in battalions.

HAMLET.

THE HERMIT's TALE.

"IN me you behold the victim of a ſuppoſed crime; ſuffering where I had never erred, and denied the juſtification which, after years of miſery, I was tantaliſed by having placed fruitleſsly in my view.

"My father was a man of ſome ſmall rank and eminence in the city of Berne, in Switzerland: he had been twice married; my ſiſter was the fruit of his firſt marriage,

myſelf of his ſecond; and we were his only children.

"My ſiſter was adorned with every beauty and grace that is captivating in a female form: a German count, to whom ſhe by accident became known, grew enamoured of her, aſked her hand of my father in marriage, and, as you may readily ſuppoſe, was not denied his requeſt.

"About a year after the marriage of my ſiſter, my father died: my mother I never had known; I ſucceeded to the property of my father, and, in a letter of condolence written me on his death by count Harden (for ſuch was the name of my brother-in-law), he earneſtly entreated me to paſs over into Germany, and viſit my ſiſter.

" The property which had devolved on me by my father's death, being ſufficient to maintain me in a comfortable though not in an affluent ſtyle of life, I had not turned my thoughts to any vocation, and conſequently had no bar to my accepting the kind invitation of the count.

" I accordingly wrote to him, with thanks for his kind remembrance of me, and informing him that I ſhould with pleaſure viſit my ſiſter at her new abode.

" A few days after, I ſet out on my intended journey, having reſolved to travel on a favourite ſteed I poſſeſſed, for the benefit of the better enjoying the fineneſs of the country through which I ſhould paſs; and, ſtrange as it may ſeem to you, this reſolu-

tion was the foundation of a ſeries of miſery which has known no abatement.

"You will doubtleſs think my tale an improbable one; — oft do I myſelf look back on paſt occurrences, hardly able to convince myſelf they could ever be: but I have learnt, from ſad experience, that the moſt trivial accidents may carry in their train a complicated and inexplicable ſtring of miſery.

"Let the words which I ſhall now relate, teach mankind not raſhly to fix the ſtamp of guilt upon that brow on which unproved ſuſpicion hangs, nor to ſhut the ear of compaſſion againſt the voice of him that is accuſed, becauſe he may ſeem guilty. — Let my tale be known to all: to the wretched it will teach that he has a brother in afflic-

tion; and he on whom fortune has ſmiled, may gather from the misfortunes of another, a leſſon of thankfulneſs and content.

"My firſt day's journey was proſperous; on the ſecond, towards evening, when I was within two leagues of the village where I meant to paſs the night, having careleſsly let my bridle hang upon the horſe's neck whilſt I eagerly gazed at the delightful proſpects which the country afforded, the animal having ſet his foot on a rolling ſtone, fell, and ſo ſeverely wounded his knee, as to render it impoſſible for him to proceed.

"Perceiving at a ſhort diſtance from me a neat manſion, I diſmounted, and repaired towards it; the door was opened by a man who appeared to be between forty and fifty years of age; I told him the accident that

had befallen me, and requeſted him to direct me to ſome perſon who might give aſſiſtance to my horſe. He immediately called to him a lad of about fourteen years of age, who was working in a garden adjoining to the houſe, and ordered him to lead the horſe to the ſtable. I was too much in need of aſſiſtance, to be very particular in my apologies, and thus willingly accepted his offer.

"It required much perſuaſion, and even force, to conduct the animal to the ſtable which had been ſo kindly offered for his reception.

"Having ſafely lodged him, my kind inviter himſelf adminiſtered to the wound, and then requeſted me to follow him into the houſe. A neatly dreſſed woman, who, he informed me, was his niece, roſe at our en-

trance, and welcomed me, as did two beautiful little girls, her daughters.—My late accident ſerved to commence our converſation; and the natural queſtions of whence I came, and whither I was journeying, with their ſubſequent anſwers, followed.

"The lad, whom I had left in the ſtable with my horſe, preſently entered, and, ſhaking his head, ſaid, 'Ah, ſir! this is a bad job; it will be ſome time, I doubt, before your beaſt will be able to ſet a foot to the ground.'

"I looked melancholy;—my hoſt, whoſe name was Dulac, obſerved it, and thus addreſſed me:—'Nay, ſir, don't let this account of your horſe diſtreſs you; I hope the boy may be miſtaken in his conjecture: at all events, if you can paſs a few days with

comfort to yourſelf in this humble dwelling, your company will be very acceptable to its inhabitants.'

" I bowed a look of thanks, for an offer by which I felt myſelf obliged, but hardly thought myſelf entitled to encroach upon the politeneſs of a ſtranger by accepting.

" ' Well, well,' continued Dulac, clearly perceiving, I believe, what paſſed within my breaſt, ' I muſt inſiſt on your ſtaying with us to-night; and to-morrow we will talk farther on the ſubject. — Come, let us ſtep into the ſtable, and ſee if our opinion coincides with Peter's.'

" I roſe to follow him out, but he ſtepped back from the door, and, with an inclination of the head, waved his hand for me to pre-

cede him; I returned his ſalutation, and paſſed on as he directed me: he was then behind, and I heard his niece riſe, and call him back. I entered the ſtable, and found, on examining the condition of my ſteed's wound, what Peter had ſaid to be but too true. In a few minutes Dulac joined me; ſmiling, he ſaid, 'My niece, ſir, was fearful we ſhould not be able to give you accommodation that you would like; for we have only one unoccupied bed, and my nephew Bertrand is gone to the next town, where he expects to meet his wife's ſiſter and her huſband, who are coming back with him to paſs a few days here: but I told her not to be uneaſy about that, for you were my gueſt, and if you would condeſcend to accept half of my pallet, you were heartily welcome to it.'

"I thought this a bad time to apologiſe for my intruſion; for if I did, it might ſeem as if I was diſſatisfied with my accommodation; and I accordingly accepted his offer with as great warmth as he had made it.

"My frankneſs ſeemed to pleaſe him; and I could not fail being gratified with his kindneſs; as his words and actions plainly ſhowed themſelves to be ſuch as proceeded from a warm and benevolent heart.

"In about an hour's time, Bertrand and his friends arrived; and Dulac preſented me to his nephew, who welcomed me as cordially as his uncle had done. Shortly after, we ſat down to ſupper: good humour preſided, and I was happy to ſee that the party appeared by no means diſpleaſed with my ſociety.

"At a late hour we parted; I believe, with mutual regret.

"From their converſation, I learnt that Dulac rented the farm on which he lived, and ſuperintended the management of it himſelf; while Bertrand and his two ſons performed the offices of tillage and huſbandry.

"My firſt buſineſs in the morning was to viſit my horſe; and I was happy to find it in a much more ſalutary condition than my fears had led me to expect I ſhould.

"Breakfaſt ended, Dulac invited me to walk with him; an invitation which the beauty of the ſurrounding country made me eager to accept. Through the moſt romantic ſcenery imagination can figure, my hoſt,

whoſe converſation was at once entertaining and inſtructive, led me to the margin of a ſmall lake, on whoſe boſom the ſun ſhining in its meridian of ſplendour, caſt the moſt vivid gilding I had ever beheld; on the other ſide of the lake, a foreſt of various trees preſented itſelf to our notice; on our right hand lay the ruins of an ancient monaſtery, with its decayed bridge, forming a hazardous paſs over a bubbling rivulet; on the left, the open country afforded a proſpect of many leagues in extent, ſpeckled at intervals with cluſters of trees, ſtraggling cottages, eaſy hills, and browſing cattle; add to this, that the ground on which we reſted was the extremity of a gentle declivity of greenſward, on whoſe ſummit nodded tall and majeſtic pines, and that, as we reclined on the velvet turf, the falling of a neighbouring caſcade met our ears; and you will not won-

der that I was entranced by the ſcene.—At that moment I felt ſenſations of the moſt exquiſite happineſs; or, perhaps, I think them the greateſt I ever experienced, becauſe they were the laſt pleaſing moments my heart ever knew.—With the ſetting of that ſun, whoſe glories I then admired, ſet my felicity on earth.

"I left the ſpot of enchantment with regret; on our return home, I expreſſed in the warmeſt terms the delight I had experienced in the raviſhing ſcenes I had juſt been beholding. Bertrand ſeemed to enjoy the praiſes I had beſtowed on his ſituation; and promiſed he would in the evening accompany me to the ſame place, which he doubted not, he ſaid, that I ſhould view with increaſed pleaſure, as the ſcene would be in ſome meaſure varied by the hour. I gladly

accepted his offer, and about ſun-ſet we reached the lake, a ſhort time before the glories of nature in their full perfection had drawn forth my admiration.—A part ſeemed now to be vaniſhing, for the ingenious purpoſe of fixing the attention more ſtrongly on that which was viſible. — Bertrand threw himſelf on the graſs; I ſtood by his ſide, gazing at the riſing moon, who, courting ſplendour from the departing ſun, faintly ſilvered thoſe waves her rival orb had before deeply gilded, and liſtened with a melancholy pleaſure to the falling of a neighbouring caſcade, the view of which I had now ſo placed myſelf as to command, till the ſcene ſoftened me into that extaſy of ſorrow, which muſt be exquiſite if felt at all, and muſt be felt to be deſcribed.

" I had often indulged ſimilar ſenſations

on ſpots equally inviting, but they had never produced in me feelings ſo refined as I that evening felt: — how often have I ſince thought they were too ſurely the ſorrowing omens of my future hapleſs lot!

"Bertrand made the ſignal for our departure, and I reluctantly complied with it.

"The exerciſe I had that day taken had ſomewhat fatigued me; Dulac obſerved it, and producing a ſkin of his old vintage, I drank with pleaſure of the cup as it went round, and found myſelf refreſhed and exhilarated.

"The evening paſſed off with the ſame harmony and ſatisfaction that the former one had done: at about the ſame time as the

preceding night, we retired to reſt, and ſleep quickly overcame me.

"During the day, the heat of the weather had been unuſually great; and the warmth of our chamber was oppreſſive, inſomuch that, waking towards the dawn of the morning, I found it had cauſed me to bleed violently at the noſe; I endeavoured in vain for ſome time to ſtop the flowing blood; and my reſtleſſneſs awoke my companion, who, learning my ſituation, adviſed me to go and waſh at the well, in a ſmall yard adjoining to the garden: I immediately roſe, and, having ſlipped on ſome of my clothes, was leaving the chamber, for the purpoſe of following his directions, when he called to me, aſking me 'If I had ever opened the door which led out of the houſe into the garden?'

I anſwered, 'that I did not recollect that I ever had.'—'Then,' ſaid he, 'take this pocket-knife,' drawing one as he ſpoke from the pocket of his waiſtcoat which lay by his bed-ſide, 'and ſtick the blade under the latch with one hand, while you lift it up with the other, or you will find a difficulty in getting out.' I thanked him for his attention to me, and taking the knife from his extended hand, ran down ſtairs, and found it of much ſervice to me in opening the door, the latch of which ſeemed to have been broken, and not yet mended; I then entered the yard, and, having drawn up a bucket of water, the cold ſoon produced the deſired effect of ſtopping the blood; and having waſhed myſelf, I returned to the chamber. Dulac, who heard me come up, aſked me, 'If I had ſhut the outward door?' I told him I had; and having got into bed, I turned

on my ſide, and was quickly compoſed to ſleep.

" On waking, I found Dulac was riſen; I accordingly dreſſed myſelf, and went down, where I found the family aſſembling at breakfaſt. After the uſual ſalutation of the morning, Bertrand inquired of me for his uncle: I told him, I had not ſeen him that morning; 'No more have I,' replied Bertrand; 'he has probably ſtrolled down to the lake.'

" 'He will return, I dare ſay, before we have finiſhed our meal,' added Martha; (for ſo was Bertrand's wife called) 'it is a very uſual cuſtom with him to walk early in a morning.'

" Bertrand's two daughters, the one about

eleven, and the other about nine years of age, had finiſhed each her cup of milk, before we had completed our meal, and immediately went up ſtairs, as Martha informed us, to attend to the duties of the houſe.

" Dulac did not return. — Bertrand began to wonder that he exceeded his accuſtomed time, and Peter went out to look for him, — as the family now conjectured he had miſtaken the hour.

" In a few minutes the girls came running down ſtairs, with terror painted on their countenances, and the elder of them exclaimed, — ' that her uncle's bed was all over blood !'

" Bertrand and his wife caſt a look of ſurpriſe at each other. — I bluſhed, and began

immediately to apologiſe for what had happened; informing them alſo, that I had riſen, by the advice of Dulac, and gone to the well, where waſhing had proved the remedy of my complaint.

" 'I ſaw a ſtain of blood upon the ſide of the well this morning,' ſaid Bertrand, 'as alſo in the paſſage leading to the garden; but I had forgotten to inquire into the cauſe.'

" 'All my uncle's clothes are lying by the bed-ſide,' ſaid one of the girls.

" 'How!' exclaimed Bertrand, and immediately ran up ſtairs.

" A general ſilence prevailed till Bertrand returned.

" ' What Nicola told us is too true !' ſaid he. ' All his clothes, except his waiſt-coat, are in the chamber ; — in that, he always wore his purſe,' added he, at the ſame time darting at me a look of ſuſpicion and ſcrutiny.

" Bertrand went on : ' He received thirty louis d'ors for his trees the day before yeſterday : did he give them to you' — looking at Martha — ' to lock away ?'

" ' No,' anſwered Martha : ' he was counting them to me, when this ſtranger knocked at the door ; and being interrupted, put them all into his pocket again.'

" ' This is a ſtrange event !' ſaid Bertrand, again looking at me.

" Aſtoniſhment prevented my utterance; and my ſilence, I believe, ſtrengthened Bertrand in the ſuſpicion of my guilt, which I afterwards found had immediately flaſhed on his mind.

" Bertrand, his brother-in-law, and the women, now began to converſe together, in low voices, throwing, as I obſerved, at intervals, the moſt ſignificant glances at me.—I felt confuſed beyond what I can expreſs, and, had not a falſe ſhame prevented me, I ſhould have fallen on my knees to pray for the return of Dulac, and to declare my innocence.

" In a ſhort time, Bertrand's brother-in-law, Laval, left the houſe, and Bertrand, then turning to me, charged me with being one of a banditti, that had for ſome time, he ſaid, in-

feſſed that part of the country, and that having by ſome means gained intelligence that Dulac was to receive a large ſum of money the day before, had planned the ſtratagem by which I had entered the houſe, for the purpoſe of plundering him of it. Not ſatisfied,' added he, 'with robbing him who kindly became your benefactor in an hour of pretended diſtreſs, you have endeavoured to ſhelter one crime by the commiſſion of a blacker enormity: but tremble, young man; for offended juſtice is diligent in detecting the breakers of her law.'

"The terror I experienced at this open declaration of his ſentiments, though I had before read them in his countenance, overpowered me ſo much, that it was with difficulty I kept myſelf from ſinking on the floor; and my agitation, I am certain, con-

firmed Bertrand and his wife in thinking me guilty.

"The door was now locked upon me, to prevent my leaving the houſe, and I was given to underſtand that Laval was gone to the neighbouring town to fetch the officers of juſtice.

"In a ſhort time, however, I gained courage from reflecting on my innocence, and I beſought Bertrand to hear my vindication; he did not ſeem to attend to me, nor I believe liſtened, whilſt I laid down at length all the particulars I recollected relative to the preceding night.

"Every ſound that met my ear, — every footſtep that I heard fall, — made my heart flutter with the hope and expectation of ſee-

ing Dulac enter; and oh! how forcibly did every new diſappointment add to the load of anxiety that weighed down my heart!

" Preſently after, Peter returned from his ſearch of Dulac. ' He had,' he ſaid, ' looked for him in vain.' Bertrand ſeemed to receive the intelligence he expected. — Martha began in a low voice to communicate to her ſon what had paſſed in his abſence; and I could not help burſting into tears, as my thoughts continued to dwell on my unhappy ſituation.

" In about two hours after, the officers of juſtice arrived, and, on the accuſation of Bertrand, Laval, and their wives, bound me their priſoner. — Bertrand then requeſted that I might be ſearched: when, — with what words or feelings ſhall I relate it? — one

of them drew from my pocket — open, and bloody — the knife which Dulac had lent me for the purpose of opening the door. In my agitation the circumstance had entirely fled from my mind. Thus I had not related that part of the night's occurrences to Bertrand: no one would now hear me explain it; and it was decided by all, that it had been the instrument of Dulac's death.

"Deaf to my remonstrances, they led me to the next town, and I was thrown into prison, there to lie, till the period at which I was destined to take my trial, should arrive.

"I apprised my brother-in-law of what had happened: he immediately set out for my prison, and having learnt my unhappy story from my own mouth, he, without delay, began to exert such interest as he could

command in my favour, againſt the day of my trial.

" Dulac returned not:—every poſſible inquiry was made after him by my advocates, but they all proved in vain; and the fatal day arrived, without any one circumſtance having occurred which tended in the ſlighteſt degree to convince the world of my innocence. The well, it is true, had been ſearched, and no body found in it; but ſtill that was not reckoned a circumſtance ſufficiently ſtrong to operate againſt that of a bloody knife having been found upon my perſon.

" My trial was ſhort, and I heard myſelf condemned to die: that ſentence was the death-blow to my ſiſter; for, as I have ſince heard, ſhe never recovered from the ſhock

given her on receiving the tidings of my condemnation. I was taken back to prison, and a confessor was ordered to attend me: my situation moved him; he began, I believe, from my unshaken firmness at the approach of death, to think me innocent, and promised to use his influence in my behalf. His entreaties, joined to what degree of weight my brother count Harden possessed in the city, obtained for me life, on the terms of becoming a galley-slave for the remainder of my days.

"Death would surely on such a condition have been preferable, had I not hoped that something unforeseen might still occur to prove me guiltless, and restore me to my country.

"I pass over the agonising separation

from my beloved ſiſter, and my tedious journey, to the moment when I was chained to the oar.

"Ten years' ſervice in the iſland of Corſica, for to that king had I been ſold, inured me to the hardſhips I experienced, but did not abate the anxiety of my mind. Oh! what a ſenſation is that of an innocent heart, ſtruggling amidſt the moſt complicated and ſevere trials, without the means of proving how diſtant it is from meriting the load it labours under!

"At the end of this period a war broke out between the power to whom I was ſubject, and the emperor of Morocco. In the courſe of a year the emperor obtained a great victory over the Corſicans, and I, amongſt other priſoners, became the proper-

ty of the grand vizier: here it became my office to cultivate the gardens belonging to the vizier's palace: my labour was leſs, but I was ſtill a ſlave; and the taſk-maſter was more ſevere than he to whom I had before been ſubſervient.

"Thus did I paſs on twelve more years, void of comfort either for my mind or my body, when, by an exchange of ſlaves, with the cauſe of which I was unacquainted, I was ſent to work in a garden belonging to the palace of the emperor.

"On the third day after my removal to my new ſituation, I obſerved an old man in a ſlave's habit, whoſe countenance I thought was familiar to me. He obſerved me not at firſt, but as I paſſed nearer him, the better to examine his features, he no

ſooner caſt his eyes on me, than he pronounced my name; and his voice inſtantly convinced me, that it was no other than Dulac who ſtood before me!

"After our mutual expreſſions of ſurpriſe were ended, I began to inform him of all that had befallen me ſince our ſeparation,—and with eagerneſs I then inquired of him, by what means it had been effected.

"'Oh!' ſaid he, 'what hardſhips have I not ſuffered ſince we parted!—what miſery have I not undergone!—But I will not murmur; for the decree of heaven is juſt, and unchangeable till its due time ordains a revocation of it.

"'Not long after you had returned to bed, on the morning on which I laſt beheld you,

I imagined I heard ſome one enter the houſe, by the door from the garden; I immediately drew on my waiſtcoat and ſlippers, and running down ſtairs, I beheld in the kitchen, attempting to open the door which led to my private cloſet, wherein I kept ſuch bonds, papers, and money, as I poſſeſſed, two of my neareſt neighbours, whom I had long known to be of ſuſpicious characters, from their being connected with a ſet of ſmugglers, who reſided on the coaſt of France.

" ' Their aſtoniſhment at ſeeing me you may well conceive; they immediately ſeiſed and gagged me, and having ſome moments concerted how they ſhould diſpoſe of me, to prevent my appearing in evidence againſt them, which by ſigns I endeavoured to convince them I would not do, if they would depart, and ſuffer me to remain unmoleſted,

they reſolved on carrying me to what they called their cave.

"'Without the houſe there were two other men, their accomplices, whoſe countenances I knew not, waiting to aſſiſt them in carrying off ſuch booty as they might chance to obtain; they were not a little diſappointed at ſeeing me only brought out to them: but, as I afterwards found that they made a point of ſecuring all who might be liable to act towards their diſcovery, they dragged me on between two of them, muttering curſes on me for having interrupted their plunder, and ſourly ſmiling as they vowed vengeance againſt me.

"'The cave they had mentioned, was dug out of the earth, ſome three leagues diſtant from the ſpot where I reſided, and ſerv-

ed for the purpoſe of concealing their contraband goods. Thither they conducted me; and having ſearched my pockets, in which was unfortunately a ſum of money I had two days before received for ſome elms, they ſet by me a pot of water, and ſome dry cruſts of bread, and left me.

"'My priſon was ſhut from the fainteſt glimmering of light; the air admitted into it was ſo confined that I found a difficulty in breathing, and its ſcent was moſt naufeous; to which, add the agonies my mind was undergoing from the knowledge of my being in the power of theſe wretches, and torn from thoſe I alone regarded, together with my anxiety for their concern at my unexpected and extraordinary diſappearance, and you will eaſily picture to yourſelf the agoniſing feelings of my heart.

"'In the dusk of the evening two other men entered the cave, and having gagged me, led me forth; after some hours' walking, we came up with a body of men, who I soon found were colleagues of those who now conducted me: along with them were fifteen other prisoners, bound and gagged in like manner as myself, and who had been taken in similar cases by these inhuman robbers.

"'After some additional hours' travelling, we arrived at another cave, much resembling that in which I had been confined during the former night; and here the other prisoners, together with myself, were led down, and deposited in an inner division: the outer one, we found, was inhabited by the smugglers themselves.

Many were the conjectures we formed with regard to our ſituation; and though it was impoſſible we ſhould aſſign any degree of certainty to any one of them, we could not ſtill forbear drawing them.

"'The next night we were again led forth as before, and after ſeveral hours' travelling each night, for ſix ſucceſſive nights, and being lodged by day in caverns ſimilar to thoſe I have already mentioned, we found ourſelves on the ſea coaſt: we were immediately put on board a veſſel lying a ſhort diſtance out at ſea; and we ſoon underſtood that its maſter bargained with theſe ſmugglers for ſlaves, which he ſold in Morocco, chiefly to the emperor.

"'There is but one ſure friend in misfortune, — reſignation to the divine power, and

confidence in its will to convert all we ſuffer here to our glory in a ſtate hereafter: I armed my heart with this chearing thought; and my communication of my feelings had, I believe, much weight on the minds of my fellow-ſufferers.

"'After a paſſage of fatigue and hardſhip, we arrived where you now find me; here have I dwelt a ſlave ever ſince;—and if providence has decreed me here to end my unfortunate days, I bend to its almighty will.'

"With what ſorrow did I behold him who had been my kind protector, in the unhappy ſituation I now ſaw him, and reduced to it, as I could not help thinking, partly by my means; as, had I not on that fatal night ariſen from my bed and broken

his repoſe, he in all probability would never have heard the entrance of thoſe ruffians to whom he had now fallen a prey.

" I imparted to him my thoughts, and the anxiety they occaſioned me; but he kindly chid me for forming my judgment from events, and declared that my lot, from the probability of its enduring ſo many years longer than the natural courſe of nature threatened him with a painful exiſtence, was his greateſt cauſe of diſquietude.

" From the firſt moment of my finding Dulac, every nerve of thought was unremittingly on the ſtretch to deviſe ſome plan of effecting our eſcape, fondly anticipating the triumph I ſhould enjoy, were I ever allowed to be the means of reſtoring him to his country and relatives.

" Whilſt my mind was thus employed in forming various ſtratagems, all of which, however, appeared ineffectual, an occurrence, as unforeſeen as unexpected, and which then appeared to me the happieſt of my exiſtence, took place: this was no other than intelligence being brought to Morocco, that a French nobleman, lately dead, had left by will, as an expiation of ſome crime he had committed, a ſufficient ſum of money for the liberation of fifty European ſlaves who had been the longeſt in captivity. And it is, I think, needleſs for me to relate to you the joy experienced by Dulac and myſelf, on being informed that we were of the happy number.

" Our ſlaves' habits were exchanged for European garments; and in a few days we embarked on board a French veſſel, which

was to tranſport us to the coaſt of Languedoc, whence we were each to be conveyed to our reſpective country.

" Our voyage for the firſt ſix days was proſperous: on the ſeventh, towards ſunſet, the wind, which had blown freſhly through the day, became extremely violent; the angry clouds rolled over each other, producing tremendous claps of thunder, and the flaſhes of lightning, reflected on the expanſe of water, appeared alarmingly vivid. The ſhip was toſſed in an uncertain courſe by the foaming billows, which at intervals waſhed over the deck, and then again yielded to the dividing bow of the ſhip. A general conſternation ſeiſed every one on board; and, with a ſilence that increaſed the awfulneſs of the ſcene, each ſeemed to await the next moment as his laſt.

At length, driven upon the ſide of a rock obſcured by the rolling waves, the veſſel ſplit into two equal parts, and an univerſal cry ſeemed to announce inſtantaneous deſtruction.

"The boat was laſhed to that partition of the ſhip on which Dulac and myſelf were ſtanding: a ſailor inſtantly ran to it; and, having launched it into the deep, ſprang into it. I heſitated not an inſtant to follow him; and, having gained the boat, I received Dulac from the ſide of the ſhip, in my extended arms. Immediately the foaming billows daſhed us to a conſiderable diſtance from the ſhip; and in a few moments after we ſaw her ſwallowed up in a whirlpool.

"We beheld the fight with horror, and knew not, as yet, whether to be thankful that we had not ſhared the fate of the unhappy ſufferers. In the ſpace of an hour the wind began to abate, but the billows ſtill rolled mountain-high; and it was with extreme difficulty that we could by any means balance our little bark. For ſome hours we contrived to effect it; till our limbs becoming benumbed by the wet and cold we were enduring, a wave daſhed over us, and overſet our boat. I could ſwim; and immediately raiſing myſelf in the water, I caught the boat, and exerting ſtrength which was called forth by the urgency of the moment, I managed again to place myſelf in it. I immediately looked round for Dulac: he had vaniſhed from my ſight. An arm was now raiſed from the water; I ſeiſed it, and

lifted from the deep the ſailor who had been the means of effecting my eſcape from the ſhip: — Dulac was gone for ever.

" This was the completion of my miſery; but as the preſervation of life, when threatened with danger, is always the predominant idea in the breaſt of man, however his mind may be clouded with ſorrow, I did not at that moment feel in its full force the loſs I had ſuſtained.

" Towards the break of morning, a ſmall veſſel, bound to Villa-Nuova in Spain, perceived our ſituation; and having ſent out to us its boat, we were taken on board, and ſuch accommodation as the veſſel would afford kindly beſtowed on us: and not till then, when the recollection of the horrors I had lately been expoſed to began to ſubſide,

did I feel how much more miſerable and deſtitute a being, than I had even before been, the loſs of Dulac had rendered me.

" The ſailor who had been my companion in the boat, a very ſhort time after our entering the veſſel, fell a victim to what he had undergone. Oh! why was I, with ſo great cauſe to loathe the world, ſpared from ſharing his fate?

" On the following day the Spaniſh veſſel gained her deſtined port, and I landed on a country where I was an entire ſtranger, and poſſeſſed neither of the means of purchaſing my ſubſiſtence, nor of earning it, as I underſtood not the language of the kingdom.

" Fortunately for me, the captain of the veſſel was converſant with the French lan-

guage; and, being a man of a generous diſpoſition, he at my requeſt furniſhed me with the habit of a ſeaman; and having given me a piece of gold, I ſet forward, thinking, in my preſent diſguiſe, I might reach count Harden's manſion in the vicinity of Ulm, unknown.

"Seven weeks ſerved to complete my journey: when, conceive my diſappointment! — on reaching the ſpot where I had hoped to meet the warm embraces of an affectionate ſiſter, I learned that ſhe had but two months ſurvived my exile; and that count Harden had alſo ſome years paid the debt of nature.

"I inquired whether my ſiſter had left any offſpring. I was informed, that ſhe had

never borne but one child, a daughter, and that ſhe was alſo dead.

" I believe I had already been wounded ſo deeply by affliction, that an added pang was imperceptible to my grief-worn heart. I can no other way account for the firm compoſure with which I heard this defeat of my laſt and only hope.

" In my way to Ulm I had paſſed this cell; I had found it was deſerted; its late poſſeſſor having been ſome years dead. I had no intereſt in the world, but rather a wiſh to ſecrete myſelf from it, leſt I ſhould be recogniſed by any of Dulac's relatives; and I poſſeſſed nothing in the world, for my property had been confiſcated on my receiving ſentence of baniſhment. I accord-

ingly determined to make it my dwelling: and having found that I had ſufficient money left, from what I had collected on my journey from the charitable, under the diſguiſe of a ſhipwrecked ſailor, to purchaſe me a woollen robe, a ſcrip, ſtaff, and flagon, I immediately repaired hither, and have reſided here ever ſince, indebted for my ſubſiſtence to the peaſantry round about, in addition to the fruits and berries I collect in the ſurrounding wood.

"I have now dwelt here fifteen years; and, ſave the little intercourſe I hold with the peaſantry, you are the firſt whoſe converſation has cheared my ſolitary dwelling. —I am now fourſcore and two years old: may you attain my years, without the ſorrows that have numbered mine! and may you await the hour of your death, my now

only conſolation, with a heart like mine, full of forgiveneſs towards thoſe who may have injured you."

Here the hermit concluded; and Lauretta, wiping away the tear from her eye, which had been drawn forth by the ſufferings of her benefactor, thanked him for the confidence he had repoſed in her, and of her own accord promiſed to be the faithful guardian of his ſad tale.

To dwell on the ſorrows of others, when the mind is agitated by misfortune, tends only to depreſs the already ſinking ſpirits. Thus Lauretta now felt a gloom cloud her mind, which ſhe found herſelf unable to ſhake off; and her attempts to appear chearful only added to the depreſſion which in reality weighed down her ſpirits, while the

tears ſtole inſenſibly from her downcaſt eyes.

The old man perceived the melancholy which had ſeiſed upon his fair gueſt, and began to converſe on various topics, which he hoped might engage her attention from the gloomy ſubjects on which he well ſaw they were dwelling: but finding his endeavours to be in vain, he again heated for her a cup of his balſamic cordial; and having bathed with a mollifying ointment her head and arm, which were now in a healing condition, he prevailed on her, as night was rapidly ſhutting in, to ſeek relief for her agitated mind in the compoſure of ſleep.

On the following morning, Lauretta aroſe at the moment the old man returned from fetching his accuſtomed meaſure of water;

and he joyed to find that the refreſhment of ſleep had diſpelled the gloom of ſorrow which had on the preceding evening clouded her brow.

The hermit had alſo been to a neighbouring cottage, where he was conſtantly ſupplied with bread, and had brought from thence a bunch of freſh-gathered grapes, as a preſent to Lauretta.

During the courſe of the day, Lauretta expreſſed to her hoſt her aſtoniſhment at Theodore's never having viſited her during her late confinement; as, had he conveyed her thither from the love he bore her perſon, it was natural to ſuppoſe he would have immediately followed her, and by force have rendered her ſubſervient to his baſe deſires. The hermit bade her be contented with the

knowledge of having eſcaped the evil ſhe had dreaded, nor ſink her ſpirits with dwelling on a gloomy retroſpect, now a ſmiling proſpect of hope was placed in her view.

" But ſhould it vaniſh," cried Lauretta, " ſhould the wicked Theodore have by any means cut me off from again beholding my Alphonſus" —— ſhe pauſed, and the tears ſtarted in her eyes.

" Why thus unneceſſarily afflict thee, by viſionary phantoms of diſtreſs?" exclaimed the ſolitary man. " From the evils experienced in this life of probation no one is exempt: it is a chequered ſcene, wherein the moſt ſubmiſſive to their fate endure the leſs affliction here, and enſure to themſelves the greater reward hereafter: whereas, to anticipate misfortune, is to double our

earthly calamities, while we endanger our future felicity, in drawing upon us the diſpleaſure of him who alone can beſtow it, by our want of confidence in his will and ability to protect us."

Lauretta felt the force of his words; but ſhe felt alſo, that it was eaſier for a man, dead to every connection with the world, to give philoſophic counſel, than for her to ceaſe to be anxious for the fate of him whom alone ſhe loved.

Towards evening, a ſprightly fire cheared the hermit's cell; and various diſcourſe waſted the hours pleaſantly, till the hermit gave the ſignal of retiring for the night; and Lauretta having joined him in fervent prayer, they each betook themſelves to their reſpective pallet.

About midnight Lauretta awoke, and Alphonſus immediately becoming the ſubject of her thoughts, ſhe lay ruminating on what might have befallen him ſince their ſeparation, when a faint ſigh caught her ear; ſomewhat ſtartled, ſhe raiſed herſelf upon her couch and liſtened; but inſtantly recollecting the near ſituation of her hoſt, ſhe ſmiled at her vain apprehenſions, and turning on her pallet, fell inſenſibly into a ſecond ſleep.

On waking in the morning, ſhe called to the hermit, inquiring the hour; and receiving no anſwer to her demand, ſhe concluded him gone to the ſpring; ſhe accordingly roſe, and entered the outward diviſion of the hermitage, when, what was her aſtoniſhment on beholding her venerable benefactor ſtretched lifeleſs on his moſſy couch!

She uttered a loud ſhriek, and ſunk upon the ground; but there was no one near to hear, or to raiſe her: at length, with tottering ſteps ſhe ventured to approach the clay-cold corpſe,—ſhe gazed upon it awhile in ſilent anguiſh; then, burſting into a flood of tears, ſhe exclaimed—"Hard, when I had found a friend to ſoothe the loſs of thoſe from whom the baſe deſigns of villany have for a while exiled me, that the hand of death ſhould, at that needy moment, have wreſted him from me!—Oh! that I had flown to him when I firſt heard that paſſing ſigh! his laſt breath, doubtleſs, then hung lingering on his lips, and my timely aid might have recalled it!—Oh! preſerver of my life, pardon my unwilling neglect of thine: and if, after death, exalted ſaints (for, ſurely, ſuch thou art) have influence here on earth, un-

ſeen by man, Oh! caſt a thought on the unhappy wretch thou didſt not here diſdain to ſuccour."

Weeping, ſhe caſt herſelf upon the bench which had not long before ſupported the old man and herſelf in chearful converſation over the crackling embers;—a dead ſilence now reigned, broken only by her ſighs.—Three tedious days and equal nights were before her, to be paſſed in ſolitude, irkſome in itſelf, and which ſhe yet feared to ſee interrupted by any unwelcome viſitant, before the time would elapſe, at the expiration of which the hermit had taught her to expect the return of her meſſenger.

Day was nearly cloſed ere ſhe awoke from the lethargy of grief and reflection into which ſhe had fallen; and having then eaten

a ſmall quantity of bread, and drank a cup of water, ſhe caſt a look of ſorrow at her deceaſed friend; and having prayed fervently, ſhe caſt herſelf upon her pallet, relying for protection on that being who, in the trials to which he ſubjects us in this tranſient ſtate, conſults only our welfare, by fixing our thoughts more forcibly on the bliſsful ſcenes of an endleſs futurity.

CHAP. XII.

Oh, my wrongs,
My wrongs! they now come ruſhing o'er my head.—
Again, again, they wake me into madneſs.

HARTSON.

WE now return to Alphonſus, whom we left on that fatal night on which Lauretta was conveyed from him by the villany of Theodore.

The night was far advanced, when Alphonſus returned from the water; and, on approaching his little habitation, his ſurpriſe was inſtantly excited by ſeeing the door open, and no light burning within againſt his return; — he entered,— all was ſilent.—He called on Lauretta, and on the girl who at-

tended her; no anſwer was given him: — he ſought her in every part; — again he called on her, it was in vain. — Frantic with ſurpriſe and fear, he ran to the habitation neareſt to his own: he awoke its inhabitants, and, ſcarcely knowing what he ſaid, or able to explain his own ideas, he aſked for Lauretta; ſhe was not there. — He then flew to the next cottage, and ſo on to every one in ſucceſſion: — Lauretta was not to be found, or any information to be gained reſpecting her. — He again returned to his own dwelling; again he ſearched it, and again he called on his beloved Lauretta; but Lauretta anſwered him not. — "She is gone! loſt for ever!" he exclaimed — "Theodore, the curſed Theodore, has torn her from me; he triumphs over me, and tortures her!" — In the wildeſt agitation he threw himſelf on the ground; then ſtarting from the momentary

trance into which he had fallen, and with his net ſtill on his arm, as he had brought it from his boat, he rather flew than ran towards Smaldart caſtle.

The baron was juſt riſen as Alphonſus reached the caſtle: — Alphonſus perceived him in the garden, and flying to him, apologiſed for his abrupt intruſion, and then requeſted the baron to inform him whether Theodore was abſent from the caſtle.

The baron anſwered, that he had not ſeen him ſince the preceding evening; and immediately aſked his reaſon for the inquiry; and Alphonſus, in as collected a manner as the agitation of his ſpirits would allow him to ſpeak, related to the baron all that had paſſed ſince Theodore's arrival in Germany.

The baron was too well acquainted with the diſpoſition of Theodore, to doubt either what Alphonſus had ſaid of him, or his being the means of Lauretta's being torn from her huſband, and immediately diſpatched a ſervant to the chamber of Theodore, to aſcertain whether he was in the caſtle.

The ſervant quickly returned, with information that Theodore was ſtill in bed.

"I did not ſuppoſe he had left the caſtle," ſaid the baron; "I am well acquainted with his extraordinary temper, and ſee the motives of his entire conduct; — not love, but pride, firſt edged him on to ſupplant you in the affections of an amiable and lovely woman; the triumph he there ſought to gain was defeated by your Lauretta's virtue; re-

venge is now the only paſſion left open to him, and he ſeeks its gratification in ſeparating the perſons of thoſe whoſe affections he could not divide: — but rely on my friendſhip and ſervices; he has doubtleſs entruſted your wife to the care of ſome bribed peaſant in the neighbourhood till he can find an apt moment for carrying her beyond your reach: — ſaddle the fleeteſt horſes in my ſtable, take two of my domeſtics to accompany you, and viſit every habitation in the circle of my eſtate, commanding them in my name not to retain her.—I will in the mean time be anſwerable that Theodore ſhall not purſue her."

With terms of unfeigned gratitude to the baron, Alphonſus ran to the ſtables, and having announced what the baron had au-

thoriſed him to perform, in a few minutes' time departed from the caſtle, together with the two domeſtics appointed to accompany him.

Theodore, if he had ſlept at all (and ſleep is rarely the portion of even the moſt ſecure villany), had been awakened by the entrance of the ſervant into his chamber, and had immediately riſen, and deſcended into the hall; he was inquiring of every domeſtic the cauſe of his uncle's having aſked for him at ſo early an hour, when the baron entered from the garden; and perceiving Theodore, who was liſtening with the utmoſt counterfeited compoſure to the ſtory of Lauretta's diſappearance, as relating by one of the ſervants to his fellows, he beckoned him to follow him into an apartment.

Theodore obeying his uncle's call, entered the room, and threw himſelf into a chair; the baron cloſed the door, and thus addreſſed him: "Theodore, the unlimited indulgence of a too fond uncle has been your ruin; — boyiſh errors, left unchaſtiſed, have ripened with your years into crimes: thoſe crimes, either from their having been confined within the limits of too lenient laws, or from the inability of thoſe you have wronged, to puniſh, have eſcaped with impunity; on this preſumption your haughty ſpirit, triumphing in its imaginary ſecurity, ſeeks revenge for every thwarted inclination; but know, that the forbearance of an uncle may be too far impoſed upon, and the laws of your country too highly inſulted. I greatly fear you have been tempting the former, and abuſing the latter."

Theodore roſe in great agitation, and was beginning to ſpeak.—

"Be calm, and hear me," continued the baron; "your paſſion of revenge has been excited againſt two amiable perſons, ſufficiently unhappy in their knowledge of you without the addition of your cruelty: but it was not enough for you that they were not miſerable;—this was only to be done by tearing them aſunder, and you have effected it: but they ſhall meet again to your confuſion."

Choaking with rage at this open declaration of the ſentiments of the baron, when he had buoyed himſelf up with the idea of having ſo dexterouſly conducted the villanous act, as to have removed all fear of the ſlighteſt ſuſpicion falling upon him, Theodore ex-

claimed, "Me! accuſe me of having carried off the wife of Alphonſus the fiſherman! You pay an exalted compliment to my taſte, and to my knowledge of my rank in life."—Then, with a ſatirical ſmile, he added, "But I beg the female's pardon, 'tis unfair to decide on the merits of her I never ſaw."

"Never ſaw!" returned the baron, fixing his eyes ſtedfaſtly on his nephew.

Theodore met the baron's eyes;—he read in them his knowledge of the falſehood he had uttered; and a frown of paſſion ſucceeding the ſneer of contumely which had before ſat upon his countenance, he cried, "No, I ſwear by heaven, that"——

"Hold," interrupted the baron, "violate

not heaven by an oath, which, ten times repeated, would not convince me. I cannot ſuppoſe that the man whom I ſuſpect to be the perpetrator of a crime, heinous as that of which I now accuſe you, will heſitate the commiſſion of a ſecond, whereby he hopes to clear away the imputation of the firſt."

Perceiving the baron to be firm in the point he was urging, and thinking a patient ſhow of innocence to be moſt likely to win on the baron in his favour, he ſaid, "If you are determined to think ſo hardly of me, ſir, I muſt truſt alone to the conviction time will give you of my innocence, for my return to your good opinion; in the interval I have, however, my own heart to refer to for conſolation."

What villain is not ſkilled in fair words?

— The baron was too well acquainted with the human heart, to aſk the confeſſion of Theodore. He knew that guilt is ſtubborn, and that the urgency of entreaty tends only to harden, not relax, its obſtinacy.

He accordingly thus addreſſed him. " Theodore, you *may* be innocent with regard to what has occurred; it would greatly delight me to find you ſo, but I much fear you are not. If you are guilty, the reſtraint I am about to impoſe on you, will be only what you merit: if otherwiſe, the elucidation of this myſtery will be to your honour. I am reſolute in my determination, that the two apartments at the end of the northern gallery ſhall be your priſon, till Lauretta is reſtored to her huſband. Should it be poſſible that ſhe has fled from Alphonſus on any other account, or with any other perſon, you

have no buſineſs to interfere in what concerns them only: if you have conveyed her hence, it is my duty to prevent your purſuing her, and I will take care to put an effectual bar to your further annoying her peace."

Theodore raiſed his hands and eyes with a look of aſtoniſhment and ſorrow, then walked ſlowly to the window with his handkerchief to his face.

The apartments to which the baron had alluded, were immediately prepared; and Theodore, in ſullen ſilence, entered them; and the lock was turned upon him by the baron's own hand.

The key of the apartments wherein the chevalier was confined, was given, by the

baron, to a truſty ſervant; with orders to viſit him frequently, and to ſupply him with every neceſſary of life, and any article of amuſement he required; but on no account to ſuffer him to paſs the limits of his priſon.

Late in the evening, Alphonſus returned much fatigued, and his ſpirits greatly depreſſed by the want of ſucceſs that had attended his numerous inquiries.

Exhauſted as he was, he immediately ſought the baron, and requeſted permiſſion of him to exchange his ſteed, and again ſet out in ſearch of his beloved Lauretta. The baron informed him of what had paſſed between him and Theodore ſince his departure; and beſought him, for his health's ſake, to await the morning, before he again ſet out. But no conſideration of what he might

himſelf undergo, could reſtrain Alphonſus from the purſuit of one whoſe ſafety was ſo eſſential to his happineſs; and, having ſcarcely permitted himſelf to partake of a haſty repaſt, he mounted a freſh horſe that had been prepared for him, and ſet out in a different direction from the caſtle to that he had before taken.

In the courſe of the following day, the baron viſited Theodore. Confinement, to which he was unaccuſtomed, had already gone far towards curbing his crabbed diſpoſition; and, on ſeeing his uncle, he burſt into a peeviſh exclamation, which ſued for liberty; and during which it was with difficulty that he reſtrained his tears. The baron having looked round the apartments in order to ſatisfy himſelf that they were ſecure in every part, and the accommodation of his

nephew good, left him without ſpeaking a ſingle word.

Midnight brought back Alphonſus to Smaldart caſtle: the fatigue of body and mind he had undergone, had ſo far exhauſted nature, as to require the moſt aſſiduous attention being paid to him; and being lifted off his horſe, he was immediately, by the baron's order, conveyed to a bed in the caſtle.

"She is gone for ever, for ever!" he exclaimed, as the baron approached the ſide of the bed on which he lay: he endeavoured to ſay more, but weakneſs overpowered him.

The baron uſed every argument he could deviſe to chear him, but he was too miſerable to be ſoothed by any conſolation, ſave the preſence of his Lauretta.

Early in the morning the baron ſent out four horſemen, commanding them to take a more extended circuit than Alphonſus had done, and to omit no poſſible means that might lead to the diſcovery of the object they were going in purſuit of.

A fever in the blood had ſeiſed upon Alphonſus, and towards evening the wildeſt delirium poſſeſſed him: at intervals, with returning reaſon, he aſked for tidings of Lauretta; then again raving, in thought, beheld her ſtanding by him; and again, reaſon returned to prove the pleaſing viſion a fallacy.

Thus paſſed on eight days of the moſt unhappy nature to all parties: to Theodore the moſt irkſome imagination can conceive; the ſucceſs of his baſe plan alone affording

him a ſlender ſatisfaction, which was nearly outweighed by the idea that ſuſpicion fell too heavily upon him to be eaſily ſhaken off. A thouſand plans had he formed for eſcaping from his confinement, and as many obſtacles aroſe to render them impracticable: worn out by curbing his violent temper or venting it on empty air, he at length ſubmitted to entreat, where before he had ſcarcely deigned to command; and in the humbleſt language, interlarded with the moſt liberal promiſes which the hope of obtaining his wiſh could inſtigate, he beſought the domeſtic whom the baron had appointed to ſerve and watch over him, to favour his eſcape.

The ſervant, on whom the baron's injunctions had been too forcibly laid, to heſitate a ſingle moment in the diſcharge of the

truſt repoſed in him, ventured to remonſtrate with the chevalier on the impropriety of the requeſt he ſo ſtrongly urged, and the inadequacy of any reward to the loſs of the baron Smaldart's favour.

The baron, who had not viſited his nephew ſince the ſecond day of his inhabiting thoſe apartments, now entered, and thus put a ſtop to a further converſation. Theodore, on beholding his uncle, burſt into a flood of tears, and calling on heaven to witneſs his innocence, beſought a remiſſion of his confinement.

"I had weighed well my reaſons for the puniſhment I have doomed you to," cried the baron, "ere I enforced it; and thoſe tears, the effect of diſappointed villany, ſhall not impel me to relax its ſeverity. Is every

thing here to your ſatisfaction? I wiſh you to undergo no farther inconvenience than what you may ſuffer in being prevented from leaving theſe walls."

To one ſubject alone could Theodore attend; he reiterated his declarations of innocence, and in louder accents implored for his accuſtomed liberty.

The baron had too tenderly loved Theodore, to be entirely unmoved by his proteſtations and entreaties, and accordingly left the apartment, leſt they ſhould exact from him an indulgence he might afterwards repent.

Towards evening of the eighth day Alphonſus' fever began to abate, and the fran-

tic ſorrow which had before poſſeſſed him began to ſubſide into a ſilent melancholy.

On the following day the meſſengers returned; they informed the baron, that they had met with an old woman, who had told them, that a female, anſwering to the deſcription of Lauretta, and who had talked much of Smaldart caſtle, had been brought in a vehicle by two men to her cottage, early in the morning of the very day on which Lauretta had been miſſed, and had remained there during the whole of that day; the woman, they ſaid, had pointed out to them the road along which the men and the female had journeyed, and they had followed the track many leagues, but all their endeavours to diſcover the object of their ſearch had proved equally fruitleſs.

Farther conviction of Theodore's guilt beamed upon the baron in this account delivered by the old woman; but conjecture only tended the more to perplex him, and he determined to ſee her himſelf, and gain from her ſuch intelligence as ſhe was able to give him: he accordingly commanded two of the horſemen to refreſh themſelves, and be prepared to ſet out again with him in an hour's time.

The conduct of Theodore was now exhibiting in ſtriking colours, that villany will ſubmit to the moſt humiliating meanneſs, in the hope of gaining its deſired ends. Whenever the domeſtic viſited him, he raved, fawned, and prayed by turns, for the grant of his ſupplication, till the domeſtic, ſenſible how wrongly he ſhould be acting were he to acquieſce, and wiſhing Theodore not to

flatter a hope which he did not mean to realiſe, gave him a gentle refuſal.

Contradiction from a ſervant Theodore had never yet experienced, and even in his preſent humiliating ſtate he could not brook it; he therefore ſeiſed the domeſtic by the throat, and throwing him upon the ground, gave a looſe to his rage. Stunned by the blow, the man lay in a ſtate of inſenſibility: Theodore perceived his ſituation, and determining to avail himſelf of it, haſtily ſearched his pockets, and having found the key of the outward apartment, he unlocked the door, and ſallied cautiouſly forth, again cloſing it as he went out.

An hour after mid-day the baron arrived at the cottage; and its hoſteſs, who was no other than Bartha, gave him the ſame in-

formation ſhe had delivered to the horſemen; adding, that the young woman had much wiſhed to write a letter to be conveyed to Smaldart caſtle, but that ſhe had not been able to furniſh her with the requiſites; and that her huſband had meant to viſit the caſtle on the following day with the meſſage ſhe had then deſired her to get conveyed thither, being the firſt day he could ſpare from his laborious avocation. The meſſage was only, that ſhe had been conveyed to the cottage by two ruffians, whom ſhe knew to be the inſtruments of Theodore, and an entreaty that the baron would aſſiſt her huſband in finding ſome means to accompliſh her reſcue.

The wood-cutter, Bartha's huſband, then told the baron, that on the afternoon prior to Lauretta's being brought to his cottage,

two men had accoſted him whilſt at his daily labour in the neighbouring wood, and inquired whether he lived near that ſpot; whether he would give them the uſe of his dwelling on the following day; and whether money could bribe him to ſecrecy. "I am very poor," continued the woodman; "and extending my hand to receive a couple of pieces of gold which one of them held in his, I told them I would do any thing but murder to ſerve them. 'We require nothing but ſecrecy,' he returned: — 'we ſhall bring a young woman, for whom you muſt provide a bed, early in the morning, to your cottage, and ſtay with you all day.' I agreed to this, and having walked with them a few ſteps to ſhow them where my cot ſtood, they wiſhed me good night, and left me."

"Proceed," ſaid the baron.

"Well, ſure enough, early in the morning they brought a young woman, and my wife took her up ſtairs, and then one of the men went away with the vehicle in which they had brought her, and came back with only the horſes; and at night one of them took the young woman on a horſe before him, and they gave me another piece of gold, and away they went, and we have neither ſeen them, nor heard of them ſince."

"Would you had informed me of this ſooner!" exclaimed the baron. "But complaints are uſeleſs where there is no remedy for the evil." So ſaying, he preſented Bartha with a piece of money, and returned to his caſtle.

Hoping that this incontrovertible proof of Theodore's guilt might be efficacious in drawing from him a confeſſion of the truth, the baron proceeded towards his apartments, where, to his aſtoniſhment, he ſaw, extended on the floor, the ſervant, juſt recovering from the blow he had ſuſtained, and unable to give any account of Theodore. As his eſcape had not been long effected, he could not conſequently have proceeded far diſtant from the caſtle; accordingly every domeſtic, and even the baron himſelf, ran out in ſearch of him.

Theodore had, during this interval, concealed himſelf in his bed-chamber, and now ſeeing from its window the ſervants and his uncle iſſue from the portal, he ventured to deſcend into the hall of the caſtle, where having met with no interruption to his pro-

greſs, he ran haſtily out of the poſtern gate, and having reached the ſtable, he ſaddled and mounted his ſteed: all danger now vaniſhed before him, for he knew his purſuers to be on foot, and he was well acquainted with the fleetneſs of the horſe on which he rode; accordingly he clapped ſpurs to his beaſt, and galloped dauntleſsly forward.

Thus providence in its all-wiſe direction allots a certain portion of triumph to the machinations of the wicked, which ultimately ſhall edge them on to become the inſtruments of their own conviction and puniſhment.

Shortly after the baron returned to the caſtle, and four of his vaſſals were immediately commanded to mount their horſes, and ſet off, in hope of overtaking Theodore.

His horſe was now miſſed, and this information cauſed the baron the more earneſtly to urge their ſpeed.

As the ſlight information which the baron had received relative to Lauretta, tended only to prove that ihe was in the power of Theodore's agents — a circumſtance which the chevalier's recent eſcape had rendered the more diſtreſſing — he forbore to inform Alphonſus either of what he had heard, or of what had that day occurred at Smaldart caſtle.

Early on the next morning the baron entered the apartment of Alphonſus, and on meeting his eyes, which the opening of the door had drawn towards the baron, he exclaimed, " Joy! joy, Alphonſus! Lauretta is found! Lauretta is in ſafety!"

The intelligence was too ſmiling for Alphonſus inſtantly to believe that his ſenſes had been true to him; he feared to aſk a repetition of the baron's words, leſt the pleaſing idea ſhould vaniſh in his reiterated voice. He ſeiſed the baron's hand, and preſſing it in his own, the tears guſhed from his eyes.

The baron now put into his hand the letter of Lauretta's own writing, which he had a few minutes before received from the peaſant commiſſioned by the hermit, who had that morning reached the caſtle.

Although the fever under which Alphonſus laboured had been much abated by the ſkill of an able phyſician whom the baron had procured to attend him, yet while the cauſe, namely, the violent agitation of his

ſpirits, continued, it was not poſſible that the effect could have been removed; and he was reduced to ſo weak a ſtate by what he had undergone during the laſt ten days, not leſs in body than in mind, that, on receiving tidings at once ſo joyful, and yet, from the deſponding ſtate of his mind, ſo little expected, it was with great difficulty for ſome time that life could be retained within him.

At length an hyſteric fit of laughter, accompanied by many tears, relieved his overburthened heart, and he preſſed alternately to his lips and to his boſom the paper which contained the account of his Lauretta's ſafety.

When Alphonſus was ſufficiently recovered from the phrenzy of joy that had poſſeſſed him, to attend to the words of the baron,

that kind friend informed him, that he would take upon himself the office of being Lauretta's guardian and conductor to the caſtle.

Alphonſus ſprang from the bed in which he had before been ſcarcely able to raiſe himſelf; and, declaring himſelf to be now recovered, entreated to accompany the baron: but to this the phyſician gave a ſtern denial, declaring that it was abſolutely neceſſary to his health and ſafety, that he ſhould not yet leave his bed, or have his compoſure broken by any avoidable means.

Sufficiently ſecure of the ſafety of his Lauretta under the protection of the kind baron, Alphonſus reluctantly yielded to the remonſtrances of the phyſician; and the baron departed, accompanied by two of his ſervants,

and the peaſant who was to conduct him to the hermit's cell.

The baron had not proceeded far on his journey to the hermitage, ere he was met by his returning vaſſals, whoſe purſuit of Theodore had proved ineffectual: and, as he now knew Lauretta to be removed from the reach of the chevalier, he commanded them to diſcontinue their ſearch.

On the third day after the baron's departure, Alphonſus was ſo much recovered, as to be permitted to leave his chamber:—his fever had quitted him;—his ſtrength was returning, and his ſpirits were highly elated, as he dwelt on the mortification which Theodore, whom he vainly imagined ſtill to be the ſullen inhabitant of the priſon his uncle had decreed him, would in his

turn experience, on his ſeeing Lauretta ſafely reſtored to the arms of her huſband. Theodore's eſcape the baron had judged it moſt adviſable to conceal from Alphonſus, as the knowledge of it could only increaſe his fears for Lauretta's ſufferings.

On the evening of the fourth day, the baron was expected to return; and Alphonſus awaited on the tiptoe of expectation the hour that ſhould bring him to his caſtle. Midnight ſounded, and the baron did not arrive: Alphonſus endeavoured to conſole himſelf with the poſſibility of the baron's journey having deceived him in the length of a few hours, and ſat liſtening with anxiety for ſounds which he might conſtrue into the approach of the expected carriage. Morning dawned, and diſappointment ſtill prevailed: day paſſed on in a ſtate of inexpli-

cable inquietude; and night cloſed in with increaſed apprehenſions to the trembling Alphonſus.

About the firſt hour of the morning, as Alphonſus was traverſing his chamber, with a mind ſwelled with the moſt hideous phantoms of the fate that might have befallen her in whom his every wiſh and thought were centred, the diſtant approach of a carriage fell on his ear. He ſeiſed his lamp, and the increaſing ſound of joy accompanied him as he deſcended into the hall of the caſtle. Unacquainted with the exact method of opening the door, and his hand being infirm from agitation, it was ſome time ere he could effect it; and he drew it back on its hinges, at the very moment the carriage ſtopped.

Alphonſus iſſued out with the lamp in his hand; and, having ſcarcely permitted himſelf to ſalute the baron as he left the carriage, he ſprang forward to meet Lauretta. Vain thought! Lauretta was not within it.

Grief and aſtoniſhment petrified Alphonſus.

The baron took his hand in his, and led him into the hall of the caſtle.

"Tell me the worſt at once," cried Alphonſus. When, at length, after many ineffectual efforts, articulation was again granted him, "Tell me ſhe is dead; the ſound will be my ſummons to her grave."

"Afflict thee not ſo deeply: ſhe is not dead, though gone from us."

"Gone! how? whither? by what means?" exclaimed Alphonſus, his eyes rolling wildly in their ſockets. "Has the vile hermit betrayed her to.....?"

"Sully not unjuſtly his venerable name," interrupted the baron. "He has, I fear, ſuffered much in her cauſe: when I reached his humble cell, the firſt object that preſented itſelf to my ſight was his lifeleſs form, ſtretched on the earth."

"And Lauretta!" cried Alphonſus, waiting to have the ſentence filled up by the baron.

"Has baffled my moſt diligent ſearch of her," added the baron.

"Myſterious heaven!" returned the

youth; "who could have learned her retreat? — who have carried her from thence? — Is not the chevalier at this very moment in the caſtle?"

"Is Theodore then returned?" aſked the baron eagerly.

Alphonſus ſtarted, and fixed a look of inquiry, ſurpriſe, and ſuſpicion, on the baron, that at once convinced him how unguardedly he had ſpoken, and how fully explicative of Theodore's eſcape, which he had hitherto ſo carefully concealed from Alphonſus, the few words he had juſt uttered had proved. He endeavoured to retract what he had ſaid; but Alphonſus flew to ſubſtantial proof; and the deſerted apartments, which had been the chevalier's priſon, were but a too certain conviction of all his fears.

Ye who have felt, can alone conceive and participate in the poignant feelings of Alphonſus, on this heart-rending diſcovery: — by turns ſilent agony and frantic grief poſſeſſed him. The plan which one moment ſuggeſted, the next taught him to reject; and, from a chaos of ideas, his perturbed mind could fix on no one to adopt in the preſent moment of deſpair and madneſs.

Deſcending into the hall, he for a ſhort ſpace of time traverſed it with haſty and uncertain ſteps. Suddenly ſtopping, he exclaimed, "It may not yet be too late to ſave her! Juſt heaven, nerve my arm, and guide my ſteps to the object of my ſearch!" and fled from the hall with haſty ſteps.

The baron, alarmed by the wild mien of Alphonſus on his diſcovering the abſence of

Theodore from Smaldart caſtle, had aſcended to the apartment of the phyſician, to inform him what had occurred, and ſummon him to the aid of his patient, at the ſame moment that Alphonſus had run to inveſtigate the late priſon of the chevalier. And, having firſt ſought him in the northern gallery, then in the apartment which had been aſſigned to him in the caſtle, and laſtly in the great hall, he ſaw not for ſome minutes the open gate which beſpoke his having left the caſtle. Immediately on perceiving it, he ran out in ſearch of him: but it was too late: he had mounted a horſe, which he had taken from the ſtable, and departed unſeen by any one.

CHAP. XIII.

On her white breaſt a ſparkling croſs ſhe wore,
Which Jews might kiſs, and infidels adore.

POPE.

DURING the two firſt days after the death of the hermit, Lauretta's ſolitude remained unbroken; and the expectation of being quickly reſtored to the protection of Alphonſus, tended alone to ſolace her in the gloomy ſcene ſhe was conſtrained to contemplate.

On the evening of the day prior to that on which ſhe had been taught to await the return of the peaſant, ſhe had about an hour retired to her ſtraw pallet, when whiſpering voices met her ear: her heart beat high,

her breath became ſuſpended, and ſhe liſtened awhile in that ſtate of ſilent anxiety which fears to move, leſt it loſe the ſound it wiſhes to catch. In a few moments ſhe plainly heard footſteps in the outer diviſion of the cave, and immediately after a voice ſaid, "Give me the light." The light was produced, and the firſt object which it ſhowed to the expecting eyes of Lauretta was the viſage of Theodore.

Lauretta ſhrieked; and immediately the man who had held the lantern, having given it into the hand of Theodore, advanced, and taking her arm in his, led her from the cave. Theodore ſecreted the light under his garment, and cloſely followed them.

The moment Lauretta had ſo much dreaded was now arrived: agony inexpli-

cable filled her heart, and choaked her utterance. Her guide continued to walk quickly forward, and ſhe of neceſſity ſuited her ſteps to his: — neither Theodore nor his companion ſpoke; — and, when the power of ſpeech returned to Lauretta, ſhe well knew how callous the flinty heart of the chevalier would be to any entreaty ſhe could offer up to him; and ſhe judged alſo, how deaf to the cries of miſery muſt he be, who would hire himſelf to be Theodore's agent, whether he was acquainted with his baſe deſigns, or had blindly ſold himſelf to execute his will.

A few faintly ſhining ſtars ſerved to light them on their way; and Lauretta ſhortly perceived that they had entered the foreſt through which ſhe had paſſed on the morning on which ſhe had ſo miraculouſly eſcaped

from her confinement in the caſtle. They ſtill continued to proceed; and, as they advanced, Lauretta began again to diſcern the fatal building riſing above a gentle acclivity, which they were aſcending.

Preſently a tucket, much reſembling that Lauretta had heard on the ſecond night of her impriſonment in the caſtle, ſounded at a diſtance: her heart thrilled at the recollection of the deluſive hopes that ſound had once raiſed in her panting breaſt, and ſhe ſtarted as the ſound met her ear. Her guard, who probably, from the ſudden motion of her body, conjectured ſhe was endeavouring to diſengage herſelf from him, drew her arm more ſtrictly within his, and at the ſame inſtant turning round his head to Theodore, ſaid, "There they are."—"Then let us ſtop a few minutes," returned Theo-

dore. "Oh no!" replied the man; "they will be houſed long ere we reach the cavern: beſides, were they not, they would not ſee us." "'Tis well," anſwered Theodore; "proceed then."

"The cavern!" echoed Lauretta's heart; and buſy thought, ever ready to torment the breaſt it inhabits, pointed out that cavern as her deſtined grave.

The tears burſt from her eyes:—the horrible idea of never again beholding her Alphonſus, at that moment ſo forcibly impreſſed on her mind, was too heart-rending a ſenſation for the tide of grief with which it ſwelled her aking breaſt to be ſuppreſſed; and ſhe was on the point of falling on her knees, and endeavouring to move the mercy of her guard, when a voice, at ſome

ſhort diſtance from her, exclaimed, "Lauretta Byroff!"

"Oh God!" cried Lauretta, "what is it I hear?"

They were ſtill amongſt the trees. Theodore called to the man who conducted Lauretta to ſtop: he obeyed the ſummons, and they looked round on all ſides: no one was to be ſeen, and all was ſtill.

"This is aſtoniſhing," ſaid Theodore. "Theſe words were addreſſed to you," turning to Lauretta: "explain them, I charge you."

"I am unable," anſwered Lauretta.

"Is it not your name?" rejoined Theodore, haſtily.

"You know Lauretta is my name."

"You equivocate. I aſk, whether Byroff is alſo your name?"

"No," ſaid Lauretta.

"What is it, then?" aſked Theodore. "Beware not to deceive me."

"It is Byroff," replied Lauretta: a moment's thought had reminded her not to utter a name her huſband had ſo cautiouſly laboured to conceal; and ſhe was too innocent in deceit to ſubſtitute a feigned one.

"Your own words have proved upon you one falſehood," cried Theodore. "How am I conſcious you have not uttered another? Therefore, unravel the myſtery of that voice, or this moment is your laſt."

"By heaven, I cannot!" anſwered Lauretta.

"Then I will," exclaimed Theodore, drawing from its ſcabbard his ſword, on which he had laid his hand when he firſt demanded Lauretta's confeſſion; and, commanding her guard not to leave her, he ruſhed amongſt the trees from whence the voice had proceeded.

Lauretta and her guide followed him with their eyes in ſilent wonder for ſome moments, when a ſudden blow from an unſeen hand levelled her companion with the earth, and, from the firmneſs with which he had held her arm, he in his fall drew her upon him. Aſtoniſhment cloſed her lips; and in an inſtant, a man muffled up in a cloak liſted her from the ground, and whiſpering in her

ear "Be ſilent," took her arm under his, and led her ſwiftly along: they continued for ſome time to approach towards the decayed caſtle. This was a matter of ſurpriſe to Lauretta, for as ſhe could not doubt his being one intereſted in her ſafety, it was natural for her to ſuppoſe that he would have led her as far diſtant as poſſible from the ſpot that contained Theodore's companions in iniquity. She was now, however, in the power of this ſtranger; and ſhe was well aware that if he was her enemy, her queſtions could render her little ſervice; if a friend, that an inquiry would be breaking an injunction on which, perhaps, her ſafety materially depended.—She ſuppreſſed her curioſity: the little portion of thought ſhe could ſpare from her preſent myſterious ſituation, convinced her that the voice of him who now conducted her was familiar to her ear; but

ſhe could not recollect where ſhe had heard it.

Being approached within about a furlong of the caſtle, her guide turned into a narrow glen which lay on their left; they had not proceeded many paces, when he ſtopped, and diſengaging himſelf from Lauretta, he ſtooped down, and having drawn aſide a bunch of furze and brambles which lay againſt the ſide of the glen, he took from an inner pocket of his coat a lantern, which, holding downwards, ſhowed to Lauretta the mouth of a ſtony rock, which ſeemed hardly large enough to admit a perſon on their hands and knees.

Her guide knelt down, and creeping forward, in a low voice called to Lauretta to follow him; — ſhe heſitated a moment: —

"This was doubtleſs the cavern Theodore and the ruffian, who had brought her from the hermit's cave, had alluded to."—She ſhuddered.—"I conjure you, follow me," ſaid her guide:—his accents ſeemed mild and perſuaſive:—Lauretta croſſed herſelf, and followed him.

After having proceeded a few feet, they arrived in an apartment which, by what Lauretta could diſtinguiſh of it by the partial and gloomy light thrown out by the lantern of her guide, appeared to her a large vault; they croſſed it, and entered a long and narrow paſſage cut out of the rock;—their footſteps echoed as they traverſed it; and Lauretta could not forbear frequently turning round her head to aſſure herſelf they were not purſued.

Having attained the extremity of the paſſage, they entered another vaulted chamber, larger than the firſt. — Her guide opened a door on one ſide, which preſented to their view a flight of ſtone ſteps; her guide began to deſcend them;— Lauretta pauſed.— "Quick, quick, I entreat you," ſaid he, taking her hand: again the recollection of his voice ſtruck her, and ſhe ſuffered herſelf to be led by him down into a paſſage much reſembling that through which they had paſſed above; on the right hand was a ſmall door, which the guide opened, and preſented to her view a ſmall room, in which were a ſeat, a table, a bed, and a lamp: they entered, and the guide throwing off a long robe and cowl which he had hitherto kept cloſely round him, diſcovered to Lauretta the perſon of Ralberg.

Lauretta was petrified with aſtoniſhment; —ſhe knew not what to hope, or what to fear.

"Be not alarmed," he ſaid, "at beholding him you once thought your enemy; he was never willingly ſo; and be aſſured that he will now protect you at the hazard of his life: but your ſafety and my own both depend on my inſtantly leaving you: —fear not to be interrupted here, and rely on ſeeing me again very ſoon."

He lighted the lamp, and was departing.

"Oh! do not leave me," exclaimed Lauretta, catching hold of his garment.

"For heaven's ſake, do not detain me to

your own deſtruction.—If you ſhould chance to hear footſteps, extinguiſh the lamp.—Angels guard you!" So ſaying, he haſtily cloſed the door, and Lauretta heard him lock it and depart.

For ſome moments Lauretta remained motionleſs on the ſpot where Ralberg had left her.—When before in his power, ſhe had felt no ſenſation but fear: now, his words had given her room to hope the greateſt kindneſs from him; and yet the air of myſtery that had accompanied them, outweighed every conſolation they might otherwiſe have brought her.

Why had this man, who had ſo lately been an aſſiſtant in her miſery, ſo ſuddenly changed his principles? A man who, when

ſhe had before beheld him, had worn on his brow the ſullen frown of diſcontent; yet, ſhe recollected, ſhe had then remarked that the roughneſs of his voice had appeared aſſumed, and his whole manner that of reſtraint. —"May not fond hope again deceive me in this imagination?" ſhe cried; "and yet the ſoftneſs of voice with which he now addreſſed me has proved me right in one conjecture; his mien alſo is varied, the frown on his brow is diſperſed, pity and anxiety are mingled in his eye, and a ſmile of ſatisfaction ſits on his lips. — My name, too! by what means can he have learnt that?"—This was a myſtery, to the unravelling of which ſhe had no clue.

Her eyes had hitherto been fixed in deep thought on the ground: ſhe now raiſed them;

— the firſt object which attracted them was the lamp, and ſhe beheld lying by it on the table—a dagger!

Her blood chilled; — ſhe perfectly recollected that that inſtrument was not on the table when ſhe entered the apartment; thus no doubt could remain to her of Ralberg having placed it there.—He had declared he would guard her life at the hazard of his own; that very declaration ſeemed to prove that he knew her life would be attempted: then why had he brought her to a ſpot over which ſuch imminent danger was impending? — And if he had really meant to protect her, why had he left an inſtrument of death in her view? — No idea occupied her mind, but that Theodore meant to viſit her where ſhe now was, and that the alternative of ſuicide or diſhonour would alone be left to

her.—But then, if Ralberg ſtill acted in the intereſt of the chevalier, how could ſhe account for the occurrences that had ſo lately taken place on the ſkirts of the foreſt?—Perhaps Theodore had doubted the faith of the man whom he had brought with him to the hermit's cell, and had taken thoſe means of freeing himſelf from him under the cloak of myſtery: and this ſeemed the only conjecture that could in the ſlighteſt degree account for her being brought by a man who pretended to be her friend, to the very ſpot to which her profeſſed enemy had declared his intention of carrying her.

For ſeveral hours no ſound interrupted the ſtillneſs of the ſcene, and Lauretta with a trembling heart awaited her doom in anxious ſilence; at length ſhe heard a footſtep quickly approaching.—She immediately re-

collected Ralberg's injunction to blow out the light, but she wanted courage to comply with it: it struck her that her murderer, unable to view her dying agonies, might wish to perpetrate the deed of death in darkness.

The key was now placed in the lock: Lauretta started from the bed on which she had been sitting; the door opened, and Ralberg entered.—Having placed on the table a small basket he had brought with him, he closed the door, and taking Lauretta's hand, thus addressed her: — "Did I understand you rightly this evening in the wood? did you confess yourself to be Lauretta Byroff, when I unseen addressed you by those words?"

"I did," answered Lauretta.

Ralberg now drew from his pocket the ivory crucifix which Lauretta had been accuſtomed to wear ſuſpended from her neck by the ſtring of pearls, which were preſented by her grandfather to her mother on the day of her marriage with count Byroff. "This then is doubtleſs yours?" ſaid Ralberg, as he produced it.

"It is," replied Lauretta eagerly; "I well remember that I left it in the turret of the caſtle, and often ſince have mourned its loſs."

"'Tis then dear to you?" ſaid Ralberg.

"As the dying gift of a loſt mother can be!" — Recollection became painful as ſhe uttered theſe words: ſhe wept; — Ralberg

ſighed, and for an inſtant placed his hand before his eyes.

"Where did your mother die?" he aſked.

"At the convent of St. Helena."

Again he ſeized the hand of Lauretta, and, with an energy that ſeemed to wring his heart, he exclaimed: — "Who was your father?"

"Count Byroff," ſhe anſwered.

The tears ſtarted in Ralberg's eyes. "Deceive me not in this point," he cried, "I conjure you; — I charge you!"

There was ſomething in his manner that

awed Lauretta. "On my faith I do not," returned Lauretta. "My mother's dying breath declared him ſuch."

"My child! my child!" uttered Ralberg, in a voice ſcarcely audible, and fell upon Lauretta's neck. — "I am thy unhappy father! I am he that was count Byroff."

What a bliſsful ſound was this to the grief-worn Lauretta: ſhe had found a friend that would protect her; and, in that friend, a father. She met his embrace with the warmeſt fervor, and he for ſome moments held her claſped in ſilence to his boſom. At length, "that croſs," ſaid he, reſtoring it to Lauretta, "was my firſt gift to your mother. Oh! tell me! tell me! all that has befallen her. — But no — I muſt not riſk the hearing now; it will too long detain me;

I muſt inſtantly leave you, or perhaps never ſee you more."

"Alas!" cried Lauretta, "have I only found a father to be again bereft of him?"

"Oh my child!" ſaid count Byroff, "I bluſh to confeſs to you the ſituation in which you meet that father. Misfortunes had driven me to deſpair, and that deſpair tempted me to —— hark! ſurely I am not diſcovered?" He pauſed,—then continued, "No, all is ſtill."

"To what?" aſked Lauretta.

"To connect myſelf with a ſet of wretches, whoſe exiſtence diſgraces humanity.—Hark! is not that the trampling of horſes?" he cried.—"I muſt fly, or I may loſe thee

for ever! — Farewell; it will be ſome time ere thou wilt ſee me again." — He went haſtily out, locked the door upon Lauretta as he had before done, and the ſound of his footſteps in a few moments dying away, an awful ſilence prevailed.

It was ſome time ere Lauretta could convince herſelf that the tranſaction of the laſt minutes was more than a dream, and, when conviction did beam upon her, ſhe wept tears of joy.

When reflection again returned, ſhe began to meditate on the laſt words her father had uttered, and endeavoured to ſolve the myſtery of his preſent ſituation: it baffled her attempts, and his declaration that it would be ſome time ere ſhe again ſaw him, raiſed not leſs her wonder than her ſorrow.

"I am in ſafety," ſhe cried, "but my Alphonſus is ignorant that I am ſo; and what pangs will not he experience on arriving at the hermit's cave, and finding me gone:—the ſituation, too, of my deceaſed benefactor will lead him to credit, that violence has been uſed againſt us both.—Oh! why did I not entreat my father to find ſome means of quieting the apprehenſions of my Alphonſus?—When he returns, it may be too late for him to meet the object of my anxiety!"

She ſlept not that night: a variety of ſenſations ruffled her mind, and drove off the attacks of ſleep: in the morning ſhe examined the baſket count Byroff had, on the preceding night, left on the table: it contained proviſions which ſeemed calculated to laſt her for two or three days; a bottle of

wine, another of water, and ſome oil in a flaſk to repleniſh her lamp.

Day paſſed on, and the ſolitude of her priſon remained uninterrupted: — night arrived, and ſhe ſtill enjoyed little refreſhment from ſleep; her thoughts were occupied by the diſappointed expectations of Alphonſus on not finding her in the hermit's cave. She roſe from her bed, and endeavoured to compoſe her mind by prayer; but the crucifix which ſhe placed before her, only afforded a freſh ſubject for thought, by recalling to her mind all the myſtery dependent on the diſcovery and conduct of her newly-found parent.

The following day paſſed on, and count Byroff viſited not his daughter. Lauretta's apprehenſions were now raiſed for his ſafety;

ſhe began to fear that the diſcovery of his laſt viſit to her, which he had ſeemed ſo much to dread, had taken place; and the only ray of comfort which ſhone upon her haraſſed mind in this freſh cauſe of alarm, was, that, had this been the caſe, they who had made the diſcovery of his viſit, would, in all probability, ere this, have made it their buſineſs to diſcover its cauſe.

Her ſpirits had become much fatigued by continual watchings, apprehenſions, and anxieties; and a few hours before midnight, a ſound ſleep cloſed her eyes for a ſhort time; but, on waking, what was her grief to find, that, having too long neglected to feed and trim her lamp, it had burned out. The utter darkneſs in which ſhe now found herſelf, appalled her ſenſes; and again throwing

herſelf on the bed, the tears flowed quickly down her burning cheeks.

Fearing, ſhe knew not why, to quit her preſent ſituation in the darkneſs which now ſurrounded her, ſhe remained upon the bed, till ſhe conjectured it to be nearly midnight. The echoed reſponſes of her own ſighs were the only ſounds ſhe had heard, till a footſtep approaching cautiouſly towards the door of her apartment, re-illumined a ſpark of hope and pleaſure in her breaſt: ſhe raiſed herſelf on the bed, and a few moments preſented to her view count Byroff, habited in the garment of a friar.

Lauretta ſprang forward to meet him; he embraced her, and without noticing the darkneſs in which he found her, and which he might perhaps imagine ſhe had effected

in compliance with his inſtructions, he immediately aſſiſted her to muffle herſelf in his robe, which he had on the firſt night left in that apartment, and then told her to follow him with all poſſible celerity.

The count had reached the door of the apartment, when, ſtepping back, he took the dagger from the table, and ſticking it in his under girdle, again commanded Lauretta to follow him cloſely, and proceeded ſwiftly along.

Lauretta followed her father's ſteps in ſilence; and by the light of a lamp which he held, ſhe perceived that he was re-conducting her by the path which had led her to the dreary apartment ſhe had juſt quitted. She remarked that his hand trembled, and

on his countenance was depicted the wildeſt anxiety.

Being arrived in the glen, count Byroff threw down the lamp to extinguiſh it; and having cloſed up the mouth of the cavern, he looſened a horſe which had been faſtened to a ſtump of a tree near unto it, and having led the animal to the level ground, he mounted it, and taking up Lauretta before him, he clapped ſpurs to the beaſt, and they galloped ſwiftly forwards.

They proceeded nearly a league in ſilence, except when it was broken by the count addreſſing himſelf to his horſe to increaſe his ſpeed: at length Lauretta ventured to inquire, in a low accent, "Whither they were going?" "You muſt preſently direct our

road," returned the count; — "but be ſilent now, I conjure you; ſome one may be concealed amidſt theſe trees." Lauretta obeyed her father's injunctions; but as ſuggeſtion but too often breeds ſuſpicion, ſhe could not forbear turning her eyes by turns on all ſides, and watching every ſhadow as ſhe paſſed it, fearing it ſhould wear the form of man, and often conjecturing ſhe beheld what ſhe feared.

It was one of thoſe nights when the waning moon ſinks to the horizon full and crimſon, and caſts a tinge of fire upon the objects over which perſpective ſeems to ſhow it impended; and as the travellers turned a ſharp angle of a narrow wood through which they had been paſſing, it ſuddenly burſt upon their view. The ſcene was mournfully romantic, and Lauretta ſuffered

it to occupy her thoughts; — at intervals a clump of trees intercepted it from her ſight, and ſhe then ſought its partial light darting momentarily from amidſt the breaks of the interwoven branches; — again it darted in full ſplendor upon her ſight, and again an intercepting hillock, whoſe gilded crown reminded her where it was obſcured, ſhut it from her eyes; — preſently its reflected beams played on a crooked lake, along whoſe bank they were paſſing, and then again, attracted to the ſilken leaves of the elm, ſeemed for a time to clothe its branches with pureſt ſnow: — at length its nightly reign being ended, it imperceptibly ſunk under the horizon, gradually ſtealing from the ſurrounding objects the gilded hue which it had lately ſent to beautify them.

After travelling three hours and a half, the

count and Lauretta arrived at a mean cottage. In a few minutes its door was opened in compliance with the requeſt of the count; and its inhabitants, a middle-aged man, and a lad his ſon, ſhepherds by trade, readily granted admiſſion to the count and his daughter.

The count quickly extorted from them a promiſe that they would not on any condition ſuffer any perſon to enter the cottage whilſt he remained in it, or confeſs that any ſtranger was concealed within it, ſhould inquiry be made of them. To this petition they agreed not leſs readily from the temptation of the large reward by which he offered to bribe their ſecrecy, than from their fear of his reſentment falling on them or their flocks, ſhould they betray him; for his habit had immediately led them to believe that he was

a brother of ſome religious order, a circumſtance which the count plainly perceived, and in which, from his acquaintance with the natutal ſuperſtition of the lower ranks of people in that part of the country, he placed his chief dependence for enſuring ſuch ſecrecy as he ſhould require during the intervals in which he judged it expedient to interrupt his journey.

Having ſeen his horſe ſafely beſtowed, the count queſtioned Lauretta, whether ſhe wiſhed to compoſe herſelf to ſleep; but ſhe declared that her mind was too ſtrongly agitated to ſuffer her to ſeek repoſe for her body: the count then hinted to her a wiſh that ſhe would unfold to him the hiſtory of her life; ſhe inwardly lamented that he had not firſt offered to communicate his own; but conſidering that his curioſity muſt be as

ſtrongly awakened as hers, in compliance with the obedience due to her father, ſhe immediately acquieſced in his wiſh; and having retired with him to the only apartment of which the cottage conſiſted, in addition to that occupied by the ſhepherd and his ſon, ſhe informed him of every particular that had occurred to her from the firſt moment of her entrance into the world, to that on which he had reſcued her in the wood from Theodore and his accomplice.

CHAP. XIV.

This is the ſtate of man; to day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow bloſſoms,
Add bears his bluſhing honours thick upon him:
The third day comes a froſt, a killing froſt,
And when he thinks, good eaſy man, full ſurely
His greatneſs is a ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls, as I do.

KING HENRY VIII.

IN relating the occurrences of her own life, Lauretta omitted not to lay before the count ſuch particulars as he was unacquainted with in that of her deceaſed mother; and the ſtreſs which ſhe laid on the declaration of her mother's innocence, with regard to the ſuſpicions which had been raiſed againſt her, on account of her continued acquaintance with count Frederic Cohenburg, her

firſt and only love, ſeemed much to affect him.

"Oh!" exclaimed count Byroff, "had ſhe but explained to me the ſtate of her heart, we might now have both been happy, and I free from guilt."

A ſhort ſilence enſued: the count then ſaid, "Now, my child, attend to the tale of thy father's fortunes, and learn from thence that the commiſſion of one raſh act imperceptibly leads on the human heart to crimes once moſt diſtant from its imagination.

"My father and his ſiſter were the only children of my grandfather, count Byroff, a German nobleman, who reſided on a ſmall eſtate about twenty leagues diſtant from Vienna; for as fortune is not always the ſure

companion of rank, his narrow circumſtances had obliged him to retire from the ſplendour of the court.

" My aunt had the good fortune to captivate an Italian marcheſe of immenſe property; and having received her hand in marriage, he carried her with him into Italy.

" My father married a woman of rank, whoſe circumſtances were but too much in the ſituation of his own; he did not many years ſurvive his union with the woman of his heart, and dying, left my mother and myſelf, his only child, to the protection of my grandfather.

" Many unforeſeen and cruel misfortunes had occurred to leſſen the ſmall property the old count poſſeſſed; and by his death, which

happened juſt as I had attained my eighteenth year, I found the fortune which had devolved on me ſlender indeed. My mother and myſelf, however, reſolved to live retired from the world, and by frugality to increaſe that little ſtock which my rank in life forbade me to attempt any other means of increaſing.

" How weak are the prejudices by which we ſuffer ourſelves to be ruled!

" A ſhort time after the death of my grandfather a letter arrived in Germany from my aunt, informing us that her huſband was lately dead, that the greater part of his property had devolved on her by his will, and inviting my mother and myſelf to paſs over into Italy, and reſide with her.

" Being a paternal eſtate on which we had reſided, it would have been deemed a diſgrace to a nobleman to ſell it; we accordingly left Germany without aſſigning any reaſon for our departure.

" My aunt, the marcheſa del Parmo, who reſided in an elegant manſion in one of the moſt eligible ſpots in Venice, received us with the warmeſt cordiality, and exerciſed towards us the moſt friendly attentions; but my mother lived only a ſhort time to be ſenſible of the marcheſa's kindneſs. On her death my aunt ſeemed to double her aſſiduities to me; ſhe told me, that ſhe had reſolved never to marry again, and ſhould, with the exception of a few legacies, leave me heir to her entire property; I expreſſed my gratitude to her in terms ſuited to the

extenſive promiſe ſhe had made me: ſhe then told me, that ſhe had provided for me a tutor, with whom ſhe wiſhed me to travel for a couple of years, before I formed any plan of ſettling in the world. She at this time was well acquainted with my attachment to your mother, which had begun a very ſhort time after my arrival in Italy; and ſhe as well as myſelf imagined that my attentions were far from being unfavourably received by her.

"The youthful mind pants for novelty; and the offer made me by my aunt was too faſcinating not to induce me for a ſhort period to forego the ſociety of my Lauretta, flattering myſelf that from the improvement of travel I ſhould return more worthy of her; for the marcheſa having ſpoken in my favour to count Arieno, he had immediate-

ly aſſented to my propoſal of eſpouſing his daughter.

"When I had been abſent from Italy about eighteen months I received a letter from the marcheſa's ſteward, informing me that ſhe had died ſuddenly, and had left me her ſole heir.

"I immediately returned to Venice to take poſſeſſion of my newly-acquired fortune, and had arrived there only a few hours when count Arieno paid me a joint viſit of condolence on the loſs of my aunt, and congratulation on my acquiſition of fortune. Before his departure he reminded me of the verbal contract ſubſiſting between us relative to his daughter, and at the ſame time entreated me, if I obſerved a dejectedneſs in her manner, not to notice it, as I ſhould only

renew an acute ſorrow which had been preying on her ſpirits ſince the ſudden death of an intimate friend, and which was now gradually wearing off.

"I readily acquieſced in a propoſition which I imagined would conduce to the tranquillity of her I loved; and on viſiting my Lauretta I was ſenſibly touched by the frown of grief which I obſerved ſettled on her languid countenance; I endeavoured to ſooth her ſorrow without reverting to its cauſe. I could not forbear noticing the ſtriking change in one ſo tenderly beloved; ſhe wept, and doubtleſs miſconſtrued the meaning of my words, as I did the cauſe of her ſorrow.

"Whenever I viſited her, I remarked that her father always remained in the apartment

with us. I now ſee the cauſe of a conduct which then much ſurpriſed me; he knew the awe in which his daughter ſtood of him, and by his preſence reſolved to prevent an explanation on her ſide from taking place.

"Curſes on the ſordidneſs of a father, who dooms his child to miſery, that he may ſwell his own proud coffers!

"I now never ſaw count Arieno, that he did not advance arguments to induce me to haſten my marriage, which, from my regard to the recent death of my aunt the marcheſa, I had thought it conſiſtent with propriety ſome time to defer. In a ſhort time, however, his reaſonings, from their co-incidence with my real feelings, prevailed over my ſcruples, and I was united to your mother.

"After the ſolemnization of our marriage, count Arieno inſiſted that we ſhould paſs at leaſt a couple of months at his manſion; his reaſon, I then thought, was his averſeneſs to part from his daughter: I now perceive that he wiſhed to keep her under his own eye, in order that he might be the better able to inſpect her conduct, which he was well aware his cruelty had given him reaſon to ſuſpect, and which he heſitated immediately to communicate to me.

"I uſed every means in my power to reſtore to your mother that chearfulneſs which had once been her never-failing companion; but a ſettled melancholy, which I found it impoſſible for me to diſſipate, had taken poſſeſſion of her mind.

"Six weeks after our marriage, I again

mentioned to count Arieno, as I had before frequently done, my uneaſineſs at the unhappy ſtate of my wife; and he then confeſſed to me, that he had but too much reaſon to believe I had an unworthy but favoured rival in the heart of his daughter.

" This was a blow which ſtruck at once at the root of my happineſs and pride: the whole myſtery of count Arieno's intereſted conduct was in one moment expoſed to my view, and I looked with contempt on the wretch who had made a traffic of his child.

" He now declared to me all the particulars of your mother's affection for count Frederic Cohenburg; was laviſh in his praiſes on himſelf, both for the parental authority he had exerted over his daughter, and for that management which had made me his ſon-in-

law. — He was the wretch who could pride himſelf on having, by one ſtroke of keen deceit, ſtamped the miſery of an only child, and inveigled me into a ſtate of eternal ſuſpicion and unhappineſs.

"I upbraided him with his baſe conduct; —he liſtened to me whilſt I ſpoke, and ſmiled, as one ſecure in the completion of his own wiſh, and regardleſs of the fate of others: when I ſtopped ſpeaking,

"'What prevents you to rid yourſelf of this rival?' he cried.

"'Whither can I fly from him?' I returned—'No where, but where he can follow.'

"'End him!'—exclaimed Arieno.

"I had never yet drawn my ſword againſt a fellow-creature, and I ſhuddered at the idea.

"Arieno perceived it; and, pretending to finiſh a ſentence which he had left uncompleated, he ſaid, — 'or ſuffer patiently that infamy which the world will attach to a man who tamely bears diſhonour in the tenderſt point.'

"His imputation on my honour pierced my heart.

"'Give me proof of your ſuſpicions,' I returned, 'and I will inſtantly challenge him.'

"'You ſhall have proof, reſt aſſured,' he

anſwered, and with theſe words he left the room.

" To what a ſtate of miſery had this intelligence reduced me!—to learn that I was an object of abhorrence to the woman in whom I had placed my hopes of future happineſs, and the victim of the joint pride and avarice of her father.

" Still, however, I reſolved to bear my feelings in ſilence till the promiſed proof was produced to me: at one time doubting the truth of count Arieno's aſſertion, and at another, fearing I ſaw it fully confirmed; and alike deſpiſing the vile author of my doubts, whichever opinion ſwayed my mind.

" About a fortnight after my laſt conver-

ſation with count Arieno on the ſubject of my anxiety, he one day entered the apartment where I was ſitting, with an open letter in his hand; he ſeated himſelf, and thus addreſſed me: — 'I yeſterday morning gave out that you and myſelf ſhould this evening ſet out on a ſhort excurſion into the country, from which we ſhould not return in two or three days; the object of my having ſaid this you will clearly perceive, when I tell you, that it has anſwered my expectation in producing this epiſtle, which I have contrived to intercept.'

"He gave the letter into my hand; and, to my extreme mortification, I read in it an invitation to count Cohenburg from your mother, written by her own hand, to meet her that evening at her aunt's.

" Count Arieno, when I had concluded reading the letter, which I ſeveral times peruſed ere I could convince myſelf that my ſenſes were not deceived in what I had read, proceeded to inform me in what manner he had gained it from the ſervant entruſted by my wife, and what means he had taken to prevent his return to his employer.

" I liſtened to him without attempting to ſpeak, for my feelings were unutterable; and I was on the point of tearing the fatal letter to atoms, when he haſtily ſprang from his ſeat, and ſnatching it out of my hand,— 'Hold!' he exclaimed, 'on this depends our hopes of vengeance.' He again ſeated himſelf at the table; and having ſealed the note as it had before been, he ſummoned into the apartment a truſty ſervant, to whom he con-

fided to carry the epiſtle to him to whom it was directed.

"Still abſorbed in thought, my ſilence had been broken only by heavy ſighs, till, on the ſervant's quitting the room, the count aſked, 'Whether I had perceived what he had done?'

"I told him that I had; and inquired what purpoſe he meant to anſwer by it.

"'Count Cohenburg,' he replied, 'will doubtleſs attend to the invitation given him for this evening; he muſt neceſſarily paſs through a dark lane in his way to my ſiſter's, which is the place of appointment with your wife; it muſt therefore be our buſineſs to provide thoſe who will there way-lay him: ſuch

may eaſily be found, and ſuch as may be relied on.—We ourſelves muſt leave the city at the hour I had mentioned we ſhould ſet out; thus ſuſpicion will be hoodwinked, and your rival fall an eaſy prey into the ſnare you will have ſpread for him.'

" I heard him pronounce theſe words with very different emotions from what I probably ſhould have done had I been an Italian:—when he ſtopped ſpeaking, I exclaimed, ' If he deſerves death, why ſhould I fear to be myſelf his puniſher? If there be a palliation for ſhedding human blood, 'tis ſurely in behalf of him whoſe injuries loudly call for revenge: why then ſhould I tempt another man to become criminal,—and, by paying the price of blood, add to the guilt that would ſtill be mine, by having inſtigat-

ed him to become the inſtrument of an act whereof I ſhould in reality be the agent?'

"It was ſome time before I could work upon Arieno, living in a country where the performance of murder is alike venal with other acts of hire, to liſten to the arguments I advanced in favour of my being myſelf the redreſſer of my wrongs, and before I could prevail on him to promiſe to accompany me in the evening to the dark lane through which he had informed me count Cohenburg muſt inevitably paſs in his way to the houſe of appointment with your mother: at length he promiſed to point it out to me, and we parted till the hour arrived at which Arieno had given out the preceding day that we ſhould ſet out on our journey; we then mounted our horſes, and rode to a ſmall

houſe about a quarter of a league out of the city, the habitation of a man who had formerly lived in the ſervice of the count, and where we had pre-determined to leave our horſes, and in the duſk of the evening return to the city on foot.

"We arrived in the dark lane nearly half an hour before the time mentioned in your mother's letter.—I drew my ſword, and we placed ourſelves under the ſhade of a low portico.—In a ſhort time we heard footſteps.—A perſon muffled up in a cloak advanced rapidly towards us; count Arieno whiſpered me, 'Tis he, 'tis the count himſelf.'—I immediately ſprang forward to meet him, and in the name of a villain I called upon him to defend himſelf againſt the vengeance of an injured huſband!—He made a blow at my ſword with a ſtout cane which

he held in his hand, and attempted to ruſh paſt me; but I quickly ſtepped back a few paces, and received his body on the point of my ſword: he inſtantly fell, with a deep groan; and diſtant voices at the ſame moment aſſailing the ears of count Arieno and myſelf, we fled with all poſſible ſpeed, I to the count's manſion, and he to the houſe of his ſiſter, where he expected to find your mother, and from thence to re-conduct her to his own.

"What miſery did I that night experience, on entering the apartment to which your mother had been conveyed on her return to her father's houſe! how did the cries and upbraidings of her agoniſed heart wound mine, although I conceived myſelf to have been ſo deeply injured by her! — She confeſſed to me all her love for count Frederic,

but called on heaven to witneſs how free ſhe was from the imputation of guilt laid upon her by me and her father. — I hardly dared credit what ſhe affirmed; and yet ſo forcibly did the recollection of the ardent paſſion I once bore her plead for her in my heart, that I endeavoured, by every attention and every promiſe of future regard, to lull her into the oblivion of him ſhe had loſt, by fixing her mind on the aſſiduities of him ſhe retained, fully reſolving in my own mind, if ſhe but ceaſed to upbraid me with the loſs of count Frederic, again to take her to my boſom, and uſe every means of proving to her her loſs replaced in an equally tender and affectionate lover.

" She that night altogether refuſed to liſten to me; and I left her chamber with a heart as deeply lacerated as her own.

" Towards evening on the following day, I had again been endeavouring by repeated attentions to win on the heart I had embittered with ſorrow, when I was ſummoned from my painful yet willing taſk, by count Arieno calling to me haſtily to deſcend to him.

" I immediately went to him, and he in a few words informed me, that count Frederic had eſcaped; and that the perſon whom I had killed on the preceding evening proved to be the ſon of one of the firſt ſenators: that five thouſand zechins were offered in reward to any one who might apprehend the murderer; and the puniſhment of exile and confiſcation of property denounced by the ſtate of Venice againſt thoſe who might be acquainted with the perpetrator of

the murder, and delay to deliver him into the hands of juſtice.

"What were my feelings on being informed that I was the murderer of an innocent man! I cannot deſcribe, or you conceive; pain, poverty, ſickneſs, loſs of friends, or any other miſery in its moſt aggravated ſtate, and even all theſe combined, can give no faint idea of the pangs he feels, who has ſhed blood, which even the effuſion of his own cannot re-animate.

"'Now,' ſaid count Arieno, 'what would that friend merit, who would undertake to reſcue you from the danger hovering round you?'

"If I were apprehended, death, I well knew, would be my doom; and death I at

that moment could have received with extaſy from any hand but that of the executioner: from dying on a public ſcaffold my heart, humbled as I felt myſelf, recoiled, and I eagerly anſwered, 'Every thing.'

"'Then,' ſaid he, 'I will be that friend. —Now attend to the means: ſhould you be apprehended for this crime, you are well aſſured your entire property becomes confiſcate to the ſtate.'

"I replied, that I was fully convinced it did.

"'Your ſafety,' he continued, 'depends on your immediately flying from this country; in ſuch caſe, it is impoſſible you can collect the value of your poſſeſſions in ſo ſhort a time as it is neceſſary for you to de-

part, in order to carry them with you; what you leave behind you in your own name, will be immediately confiſcated: thus make over to me your perſonals, by far the greater diviſion of your property; leave your eſtate open to confiſcation, as ſome ſmall atonement for your offence; make your eſcape inſtantly, while it yet remains in your power to effect it; and depend on my remitting to you what you ſhall make over to me, as ſoon as you ſhall have reached a place of ſafety.'

"There was a kindneſs in this offer of count Arieno to aſſiſt me in my diſtreſs, that made me overlook his paſt conduct; and with thanks I acquieſced in his propoſition, and quickly proceeded to put it in execution.

"I had ſcarcely put my hand and ſeal to the deed which transferred to count Arieno my perſonal property, diſperſed through many parts of Italy, when information was brought us by the phyſician who had attended your mother, that ſhe had fled from her father's houſe. The count ſeemed to receive the tidings with indifference; and I was too much occupied by my own ſafety to give any farther thought to what I had heard, than that ſhe had learned count Cohenburg's exiſtence, and found means of eſcaping to him.

"A few hours afterwards I ſet out from the Venetian dominions, and in little more than a week I arrived in Paris, the place where I had determined to ſeek ſhelter from the laws of Venice, as I little doubted, from

the number of ſpies I well knew to be employed by that ſtate, I ſhould ſoon be diſcovered to be the perpetrator of the deed on which I ſhuddered to reflect.

"On the day after my arrival, I wrote to count Arieno to inform him of the place of my retreat; I thought it unneceſſary to add that an immediate remittance would be welcome to me, as he well knew that I had taken with me only what caſh I happened to have in my poſſeſſion at the time of my departure, and a few trinkets of ſmall value.

"In about three weeks I received from him a letter, the purport of which, to my great conſternation, and, I bluſh to add, aſtoniſhment, knowing what I already did of his infamous character, was nearly in the following words:—That the ſtate had gain-

ed information of my being the aſſaſſin of the ſenator's ſon, and had accordingly confiſcated ſuch of my property as was publicly known to be mine; that he lamented this diſcovery having ſo early taken place, as it would inevitably prevent his being to me the friend he had pledged himſelf to be; for that, as a Venetian ſenator, he ſhould incur the fear of death, by being known to aſſiſt any man now lying under the penalty of its laws; and could accordingly only ſend me his thanks for having, by the deed that had paſſed between us on the evening of my leaving Venice, given him the power of profiting by a ſum of money which could never again on any terms be mine, and which would otherwiſe have fallen to the uſe of the ſtate.

"'Upright ſenator!' I exclaimed, on

perufing this infernal epiſtle; 'cautious in obſerving the outward forms of that ſtate that he heſitates not privately to plunder!' — Oh! my child, how many villains wear the maſk of worth like him, and, with the garb of office, cover a heart which knows no intereſt but its own; and contemplates no crime, of which an accumulation of its private wealth and pride will not ſeem to authoriſe the performance!"

The count pauſed a moment, then continued — "The keen ſenſe of my own feelings, on a reviſal of the villany that had been practiſed againſt me, may perhaps have tempted me to draw too harſh a ſtricture on mankind in general: but ſurely I cannot be wrong in aſſerting, that he who will act villanouſly in the tranſactions of private life,

cannot lay aſide his nature when he acts for the public.

" To what a ſituation was I now reduced! my whole property conſiſting of only fifteen zechins, and two rings of ſmall value, without the poſſible means of recovering what had ſo baſely been wreſted from me, or of ſeeking redreſs from him who had ſo deeply injured me, without expoſing myſelf to the greateſt of dangers; — in a city where I was an entire ſtranger; without a friend to whom I could apply for aſſiſtance; without an acquaintance to whoſe converſation I could fly for a tranſitory relief of my painful feelings, and without a chearful thought that would afford me a momentary conſolation within my own breaſt!

" My firſt ſtep, however, was to avoid

detection; as I knew not what power the ſtate of Venice might have of demanding my perſon, ſhould my retreat be diſcovered; and ſometimes feared that Arieno, to inſure to himſelf the poſſeſſion of my property, might give information to the ſtate whither I was fled, and have me apprehended, that, by my death, all doubts of my ever regaining what was lawfully mine, might be done away; but then again I conſidered, that he would be well aware, that, in caſe of ſuch an accuſation from him, revenge would prompt me to declare the ſtate, rather than him, the poſſeſſor of that property I was myſelf doomed to forego; and this quieted my fears of any farther moleſtation from him: but, at all events, judging it to my advantage to obſcure myſelf as much as poſſible, I changed my habit to that of the country I was now in, and called myſelf Montville, re-

ſolving ſtill to remain in Paris, as the place where I was moſt likely to eſcape obſervation, well knowing that I ſhould be moſt free from obſervation in the midſt of a crowd.

"I had taken a lodging in an obſcure part of the city; and my only amuſement was the frequenting of a tavern in the neighbourhood, much reſorted to by young men, who, though perhaps not in the moſt exalted ſtations of life, were however men of faſhion and fortune.

"Every evening they met, in a greater or ſmaller number, at this houſe, and draughts were their entertainment: as a ſtranger, I had been generally noticed by them, and ſolicited to play; I knew myſelf to be an adept in the game, and thus readily accepted their

invitation. The ſums they ſtaked were not large, or I could not have hazarded an engagement. I found ſome my equals in play; and when I engaged with theſe, good and bad fortune were alternately mine; but as my play was far ſuperior to the generality of thoſe who engaged with me, and as my circumſtances, as I was ſometimes tempted to think, induced me to place more attention on my game than my adverſary uſually gave to his, I was commonly, at the hour of retiring, the winner of a trifling ſum; a circumſtance which in my ſituation I conſidered of the moſt conſolatory and promiſing nature: my precarious ſituation had taught me, hard as the reverſe was, to be an œconomiſt; and in the courſe of ſix months I had collected nearly fifty louis-d'ors, and I now began to turn my thoughts to a ſubject to which they had before been directed; namely,

whether I ſhould purſue any means of diſcovering the retreat of your mother, and of revenging myſelf on the deſtroyer of my peace.

" After many debates with my own heart, I drew this concluſion: — 'Will the death of count Cohenburg reſtore my peace? — No! — Will it not add guilt to hands already too deeply imbrued in blood? — It will! — Can I hope that my wife will be to me what ſhe ought to be? — No! — Why then ſeek after her who ſhuns me, and add another ſting to an already wounded conſcience, by the murder of one whoſe death cannot reſtore my loſt tranquillity?'

" Having reſolved that it behoved me to forget an object lately ſo dear to me, my mind became more calm; for, when an opi-

nion is once firmly adopted, every ſubſequent thought ſeems to ſtrengthen the juſtneſs of that opinion.

" When my thoughts at times did turn back to your mother, amidſt the cenſures my injuries raiſed againſt her in my heart, I ſtill felt a portion of pity for one who had been driven to deſpair by the cruelty of an unfeeling parent. — For that parent, when my mind reverted to him, and too often, alas! it did, I felt the abhorrence I ſhould have done againſt a dæmon. — ' Is it poſſible,' I would cry, ' the earth can contain a monſter capable of his accumulated crimes? — the ſacrificer of an only child to his avarice! — the lurer of a youth into a marriage into which he had deceived his ſenſes! — the inſtigator of that youth, when become his daughter's huſband, to murder him who

ought to have poſſeſſed her hand! — the raviſher of that youth's property, by the abuſe of that faith which can alone bind man to man; and by the ſame act, the plunderer of that ſtate, whoſe rights he had pledged his moſt ſolemn vow and life to defend!"

CHAP. XV.

What equal torment to the griefe of minde,
And pyning anguiſh hid in gentle heart,
That inly feeds itſelf with thoughts unkinde,
And nouriſheth her own conſuming ſmart?

SPENCER.

COUNT Byroff was now interrupted by the entrance of the old ſhepherd, whoſe ſon having juſt returned from milking, the good man had brought the travellers a bowl of warm milk. The count commended his attention, and Lauretta drying thoſe tears which had been drawn into her eyes by her ſympathy in the misfortunes of him who had given her being, drank of the milk, and found herſelf much refreſhed by it; the count did the

ſame; and the peaſant retiring well pleaſed at the ſatisfaction expreſſed by his gueſts in their acknowledgments of his kindneſs, count Byroff thus went on.

" I had reſided nearly two years in Paris, when, returning one day from walking in the ſuburbs of the city, two men, whom I had for ſome time perceived to be obſerving me, followed me into the houſe where I lodged, and introduced themſelves into my apartment. On their entrance I raiſed a look at them which as plainly inquired their buſineſs with me, as if I had demanded it in open words. ' You muſt go with us, Monſieur, if you pleaſe :' ſaid one of them. — ' Whither ?' I inſtantly aſked. — The man who had before ſpoken, replied to my queſtion, by drawing from his pocket a paper ſealed at one corner, which he held out to

my view with one hand, whilſt he pointed to it with the other. On ſeeing the paper, it immediately flaſhed upon my mind that theſe men were emiſſaries ſent in purſuit of me from the ſtate of Venice; but gueſs my aſtoniſhment when I learnt that the fatal paper was a *lettre de cachet* to convey me to the Baſtile.

" The two men hurried me into a carriage, the blinds of which were drawn up: we rolled rapidly through the ſtreets, and in a ſhort time I felt myſelf paſſing over the draw-bridge which leads to the manſion of wanton tyranny and deſpair.

" When the carriage ſtopped, I was taken from it by two men whoſe countenances I had not before beheld, and conducted through a paved court bounded by a lofty

wall, into the firſt hall of that building, the bare glimpſe of whoſe ſtubborn walls had ſo lately frozen my blood. Alas! how far was I then from conjecturing I was myſelf about to pine in ſolitude within them.

" Through two other halls and many intricate paſſages, my guards conducted me, till, arrived at an iron door which was nearly at the end of a long gallery terminated by a narrow window, through which the iron bars, faſtened acroſs it, ſuffered but a ſmall portion of light to enter, they ſtopped; and the door being unlocked by a perſon who had met us in the ſecond hall, and from thence preceded us, and whom I afterwards found to be the governor, I was commanded to enter, and the door was locked upon me; a ſmall ſquare room preſented itſelf to my ſight; a broken table, a ſtool, a mattraſs,

and a quilt, were its only furniture: the walls, which had been of plaſter, were mouldering away in many parts, and in others being covered with a green ſcurf, confirmed me in the dampneſs of the place, which the chill that had ſeized me on entering it, had firſt cauſed me to remark.

"The ſtillneſs of the ſcene now gave me room for reflecting on my ſituation; I could form no conjecture for the cauſe of my preſent confinement, except that of the ſtate of Venice having found a power of arreſting my perſon for a crime committed within its dominions, even after I had quitted them; but this ſuppoſition appeared ſo repugnant to the idea that I had always been taught to entertain that the authority of every ſtate was bounded by the limits of its territories, that I could not reconcile it to my mind, though

ſtill I could diſcern not even the ſhadow of any other cauſe for my preſent confinement.

" I well knew on how ſlight and even falſely grounded ſuſpicions of acting againſt the government, many unhappy men had been condemned to waſte away a life of ſolitude and miſery within the dreary and unrelenting walls within which I was now a priſoner; but I was ſo conſcious that the little intereſt I had felt in the public affairs of a kingdom where I was an entire ſtranger, had led me ſtill leſs ever to join in a converſation of which they had been the topic, that I felt too ſecure in my innocence on that point, to give it a ſecond thought connected with my preſent confinement.

" For ſome hours I wandered about my priſon in that ſtate of ſuſpenſe which is per-

haps the moſt acute ſuffering the mind can undergo; towards evening a ſmall portion of bread and water was brought me by a man who appeared to be an inferior jailor, and who immediately left my apartment on having placed my ſcanty pittance on the table.

"As night ſhut in, the horrors of my ſituation ſeemed to accumulate: there was only one window in my priſon, and it was ſtrongly grated with iron bars; I placed the ſtool under it, and having got upon it, I perceived that the window looked into a court, ſimilar to the one through which I had paſſed when conducting to my priſon.

"Night paſſed in intervals of ſleeping and waking, and morning brought back my jailor with another ſcanty portion of the ſame

fare that had been brought me by him the preceding evening.

" Thus paſſed on three days without any interruption of my ſorrows or ſolitude, ſave the morning and evening viſits of my jailor: for the firſt two days I had put to him many queſtions relative to my ſituation; but as his ſole anſwer had been a ſhake of the head, ſometimes accompanied by a ſour ſmile, I deſiſted from my inquiries.

" On the fourth morning the governor, accompanied by two guards, entered my priſon. ' You muſt take the air to day,' he ſaid, ' or your health will be injured by your confinement.' The guards took me between them, and followed him out of the apartment into the gallery; he deſcended

the firſt flight of ſteps, croſſed a ſhort paſſage, and then aſcending a few ſtone ſtairs, at the top of which was an iron door, he opened it, and I was led by my guards upon a platform of about twelve feet ſquare, but ſo cloſely ſurrounded by other parts of the building, that no object except the ſky was diſcernible from it.

"The guards ſtationed themſelves one on each ſide of the door; the governor had gained the middle of the platform: I went up to him, and beſought him to inform me of the reaſons of my confinement; he refuſed to anſwer me, and immediately left the platform. The guards were left with me, and I tried to draw them into converſation, but my efforts were ineffectual. In about half an hour the governor again appeared on the platform, and I was immediately recon-

ducted to my prison in the same manner as I had been led from it.

"Every fourth day I was led out to take the air and exercise allotted to me; and with this sole interruption of my solitude, crept on seven weary months.

"One morning about this time my prison-door was opened, and the governor and two of his guards entered, not a little to my surprise, as I had visited the platform the day before; the guards took me between them, and following the governor as on other occasions, conducted me into a large hall, where sat at the upper end of the table a man, who, I was given to understand, was the lieutenant de police, and below him sat two other persons. I was placed at the lower end of the table; an oath that I should

deliver only the truth was adminiſtered to me by the ſecretary; and the lieutenant then ſaid to me, 'You call yourſelf, Montville?'

"'I do.'

"'Is it your real name?'

"I hesitated to anſwer; and he continued, 'Remember you are on oath. Is it your real name? I aſk.'

"'It is not.'

"'What is your real name?'

"'I have particular reaſons for wiſhing to conceal it.'

"'Note that accurately,' ſaid the lieu-

tenant, addreſſing himſelf to the ſecretary; and then ſaid to me, 'Are you a Frenchman?'

"'No.'

"'You are an Italian?'

"'No.'

"'Do not attempt to deceive me, or it will be the worſe for you. You ſay you are not an Italian?'

"'I am not.'

"'But you came from Italy to Paris?'

"'I did.'

"'How long have you been in France?'

"'Twenty-two months, excluſive of the ſeven I have paſſed here.'

"'What brought you to Paris?'"

"'My motive I muſt decline revealing.'

"'You know it then to be a criminal one?'

"'Why ſhould you draw that inference?'

"'You are to anſwer, not to queſtion, young man,' ſaid the lieutenant ſurlily. He whiſpered the man who ſat by him: they turned over the leaves of a book which lay before them, pointed to different parts of various pages,—again they whiſpered, and

the lieutenant then aſked me, 'By what means I was ſupported?'

"'Does any one accuſe me of gaining my means unjuſtly?' I ſaid.

"'I ſhall not a third time warn you that you are here to anſwer, and not to queſtion,' ſaid the lieutenant. 'How are you ſupported?'

"'I brought money with me from Italy.'

"After many other queſtions of a ſimilar nature, and which in the aggregate ſeemed to me to amount to little, though on ſome of them the lieutenant had laid great ſtreſs, I was re-manded to my priſon, equally ignorant of the charge on which I was arraigned as when I firſt entered it.

"About two months after I was again ſummoned to appear in the hall as before; the oath was adminiſtered as on the preceding occaſion, and the lieutenant began by aſking me many queſtions even more trivial than the former ones had been: at length, ſtarting from the train of queſtions in which he was advancing, he ſaid, 'On your former examination, you confeſſed yourſelf, I think, an Italian.'

"'I did not.'

"'You avowed yourſelf then to be employed by that ſtate?'

"'I did not.'

"'You alleged that you were lately come from Italy.'

"'I did.'

"'And that your motive for coming hither was a criminal one.'

"'You drew that inference, but I did not ſubſcribe to it.'

"'Why did you not confute it by a declaration of the truth?'

"'May I, before I anſwer this demand, make one myſelf?'

"'You cannot oblige us to anſwer it, though we can force you to reply to ours.'

"'Admirable adminiſtration of juſtice!' hung on my tongue: but I ſtifled my emotion, and ſaid, 'Am I permitted to aſk one queſtion?'

" ' Name it.'

" ' On what charge am I here a priſoner ?'

" The lieutenant de police, and the man on his right hand, whiſpered together ſome minutes, and the lieutenant then ſaid, ' You ſtand here arraigned of being employed by a foreign power as a ſpy upon this government.'

" ' By all my hopes of heaven the accuſation is falſely founded,' I cried.

" ' Where are your proofs ?'

" ' You ſhall have them.'

" The lieutenant ſmiled contemptuouſly.

"The innocence of my heart, however, in regard to the accuſation now ſupporting againſt me, made me view his ſupercilious countenance with indifference; and knowing myſelf now not to be retained at the inſtigation of the ſtate of Venice, I comparatively felt no fear in confeſſing a crime committed againſt it, when I hoped by ſo doing to free myſelf from my preſent alarming ſituation; and I immediately related ſuch parts of my ſtory as tended to ſhow my motive for having taken up my abode in Paris.

"When I had concluded my ſtory—'We will inquire into the truth of this,' ſaid the lieutenant; and, making a ſignal to the guards, I was taken back to my priſon.

"For ſome time I felt myſelf comparatively happy, as I did not doubt that en-

largement muſt be the reſult of the promiſed inquiry; but as the mind, in reflecting on any agitated ſubject, leans alternately to the ſide of hope and fear, I began to apprehend, that the ſtate of Venice, ſhould it, by means of the lieutenant's inquiries concerning me, learn my preſent ſituation, might find means, as I was in priſon, of having me retained there for the crime I had really committed, though I might be abſolved of that under which I was now lying falſely accuſed.

"Eight months elapſed in an alternate ſucceſſion of fear and expectation, before I was again ſummoned to appear in the hall; and the reſult of what then paſſed was, that no ſatisfactory corroborations of the ſtory I had related having been procured by thoſe employed for that purpoſe by the lieutenant,

the tale I had told was deemed either to have been framed by myſelf for my own preſervation, or an invention delivered to me by the ſtate of Venice when commiſſioned by it into France, and which I had been commanded to recount in caſe of my being apprehended, as an excuſe for my ambiguous conduct; and that the ſpace of two days only would be allowed me to conſider whether I preferred, by confeſſing my real character, to throw myſelf on the mercy of my judges, or, by perſiſting in my deceit, to provoke them to draw from me the truth by torture.

"In anſwer to this decree, I could only repeat, in the moſt ſolemn terms, my innocence of the fact of which they accuſed me.

"They undoubtedly heard my declarations without interruption, but I could clearly

perceive that their opinions were decided, and that either they were not, or would not be, moved by my vows and aſſeverations.

"On entering my priſon I threw myſelf on my mattraſs, and amidſt the ſorrows that ſeemed to await me, the only idea which induced me to look forward with a degree of calmneſs and reſignation to the fate with which I was threatened, was, that the unjuſt puniſhment I was about to ſuffer, might be accepted by him who alone could read my heart, in expiation of the innocent blood I had ſhed.

"At length the day big to me with terror and agony arrived; at an early hour I was once more led into the hall, and the lieutenant again inquired, 'Whether my

ſtubbornneſs had relaxed, and I was willing to confeſs my crime?'

"I reiterated my vows and aſſeverations of innocence; but they and my prayers for mercy were heard with equal indifference, and I was dragged into that earthly hell, where demons, in the ſhape of men, riot in acts of wanton cruelty.

"Innumerable inſtruments of torture, of which I knew not the uſe, but feared too ſoon to learn it of each I beheld, were ſuſpended againſt the walls, and ſcattered on the floor. At one end was an immenſe fire, which, notwithſtanding its ſize, two men, whoſe ſavage countenances were by no means the leaſt terrific features of this ſoul-harrowing ſcene, were feeding with every provocative of fierceneſs.

"Again it was recommended to me to confeſs ere it was too late, and again I could only repeat, however incredulous were my hearers, that I had nothing to confeſs.

"I was then placed in a chair, and a circle of about three inches in diameter on the top of my head ſhaved bare of its hair.

"The ſoles of my feet and my breaſt were afterwards bared, and being faſtened in the chair, it was drawn near to the fire, to the fierceneſs of which the naked parts of my body were expoſed, whilſt large drops of the coldeſt water were made to fall ſingly on the crown of my head.

"In a few minutes the pangs produced

by the contraſt of feelings I was undergoing, became ſo intenſe that I ſhrieked violently. The lieutenant approached me, and aſked, 'if I was willing to end my puniſhment by confeſſion?'

"Had I at the moment been able to have conceived any other means of freeing myſelf from the ſufferings I was enduring, I ſhould without heſitation have adopted it; but I was well aware, that if, to liberate myſelf at the preſent moment, I uttered a falſe confeſſion, I could not afterwards retract it, and that I ſhould in the end probably only ſuffer the more ſeverely for having allowed their falſe accuſation to be a juſt one; I therefore only continued to declare my innocence, and in the moſt moving terms to ſupplicate for mercy.

"In a quarter of an hour's time the torture inflicted on me became agoniſing, paſt all endurance, and I beſought my tormentors to give me death: my hands and feet were bound; I had bit my tongue, till the blood ſtreamed from my mouth upon my breaſt; and my eyes, which the pain I was undergoing had widely extended, from being expoſed to the fierceneſs of the fire, were far from forming the leaſt part of my ſufferings.

"Every moment was now ſo forcibly diminiſhing the powers of nature, that the phyſician, who had been brought to announce to my tormentors when I had undergone what my frame could endure, commanded me to be gradually removed from the fire, and the water to ceaſe dropping. I had been drawn back only a few feet,

when, exhauſted by the agony I had endured, the little ſtrength I had remaining fled from me, and I fainted whilſt yet bound in the chair of torture."

CHAP. XVI.

Each ſubſtance of a grief hath twenty ſhadows,
Which ſhow like grief itſelf, but are not ſo;
For ſorrow's eye, glazed with blinding tears,
Divides one thing entire to many objects;
Like perſpectives, which, rightly gaz'd upon,
Shew nothing but confuſion; ey'd awry,
Diſtinguiſh form.

KING RICHARD II.

"ON recovering, I found myſelf lying on my mattraſs: a blanket had been added to my quilt; and the phyſician, on my again opening my eyes, adminiſtered to me a cup of wine, the firſt variation of my daily food of bread and water that had paſſed my lips ſince my entrance into the Baſtile.

"For ſeveral days the phyſician continued

to viſit me; and having youth and ſtrength on my ſide, in a month's time I began to recover the uſe of my bodily and mental faculties, both of which had been much injured by what I had undergone. The greateſt cauſe of remembrance that remained to me of what was paſt, was the weakneſs of my eyes when they met the light.

"Near ſix months paſſed ere I was again led out to the platform for air, and I even then found my limbs very inadequate to the taſk of ſupporting me more than a few minutes at a time.

"Day rolled on after day, and month after month, but ſtill I received no information whether what I had undergone was deemed a ſufficient confirmation of my innocence, or not; and as I was ſtill retained a

priſoner, I kept looking forward with increaſing apprehenſion to a trial more ſevere than the one I had already paſſed through.

"I muſt here mention a circumſtance which, however trivial it may appear to you, dwells on my mind, and ſeems to claim my attention.

"Nearly a year had elapſed ſince my undergoing the torture, when one morning a ſmall part of the window having been left open to air my priſon, a red-breaſt flew into the apartment, and perching on the table, began to peck the bread which had juſt been brought me as half my day's proviſion. I approached a few ſteps towards it, that I might the better obſerve it; for in my preſent ſituation, any object which engaged my attention, afforded me a moment of unex-

pected happineſs. I perceived that it ſaw me, and I ſtopped, leſt I ſhould drive it away; but the food ſeemed to be a greater attraction than my preſence was a cauſe of fear, and, to my ſatisfaction, it went on pecking the bread.

"Its plumage was rough, and raiſed againſt the cold, and it bore every mark of having ſuffered from the inclemency of the ſeaſon, which was that of a ſevere froſt; a deep ſnow had ſome time covered the ground, and the eagerneſs with which it preyed on its newly-found prize, ſhowed that the weather had proved to it, whoſe feeble claws were unable to turn up the depth of ſnow, a ſeaſon of famine.

"I pitied it for what it had ſuffered, and participated in its preſent apparently great

ſatisfaction;—'Yet, poor fooliſh wanderer!' I cried, 'thy native timidity, when the call of nature is ſatisfied, will again drive thee to the piercing cold and hunger from which thou haſt now found protection!—Thou art not wiſe enough to inſure it to thyſelf, and mayeſt perhaps periſh for want of that which thou ſhouldſt never lack by living here, could I but teach thee to know my good will towards thee!'—In the energy of what I felt, I drew nearer to the table; and the bird, having either finiſhed its meal, or being terrified by my approach, flew two or three times round the room, in ſearch of the ſpot by which it had entered, and having found it, vaniſhed in a moment from my ſight.

"'Thou art gone!' I exclaimed, 'never to return hither!'—There was a charm in

the laſt words I had uttered, that ſeemed to render even the biting air and keen famine to which the little animal would be expoſed, an enviable ſituation when compared with my own.—'Many are the hardſhips thou wilt endure,' I cried; 'but thou haſt a balm for all thy ſufferings,—thou enjoyeſt liberty,—the choiceſt gift and richeſt bleſſing heaven pours on its created beings; deprived of it, all other ills in life are light.—Knowing what I have learnt from experience of the bitterneſs of its loſs, I would not be the wretch to inflict it, e'en on the little bird I have juſt beheld, no! though my own enlargement were the price of its captivity!'

"On the following morning, to my great delight and ſurpriſe, the little bird again flew into my priſon; I threw it ſome crumbs; it

picked them, hopped about the floor, flew upon the table, fluttered about the room, and again left me.

"Every morning I was now visited by the red-breast; I had nothing else to occupy my attention; and I found a great source of amusement in waiting the arrival of my feathered visitor: I never failed to feed him plenteously, and used every endeavour to divest him of his natural timidity, and dispose him to receive my caresses; and I even flattered myself that he began to view me without fear, as he sometimes remained several hours in my prison; but, alas! when spring began to exhale her inviting sweets, my little companion, wearing too much the complexion of the world he inhabited, forgot his fosterer in the hour of adversity, nor returned to sooth his solitary moments. Spring,

ſummer, and autumn paſſed, and I began to think that ſome accident had befallen him, or that he had entirely forgotten the ſpot where he had been ſo hoſpitably received, and gave him up as loſt.—On the part of my perſecutors alſo, a ſtrict ſilence as to my doom had been obſerved towards me, and I began to fear I was a priſoner for life.

"Winter was now again advancing, when, as I was one morning reclining on my hard bed in mournful meditation, a fluttering in the room called my eyes to the part where I had heard it, and I beheld on the table my long-lamented bird!

"I felt the glow of unexpected pleaſure mount into my cheeks; and I immediately roſe and crumbled for him a piece of bread: he chirped in thankfulneſs for my gift, and I

even imagined he ſeemed as pleaſed as myſelf at the renewal of our acquaintance.

"During the winter he continued to viſit me, as he had done the former one; and having made for him a perch, which I contrived, by means of a crooked nail, to form out of a long ſplinter which I had ſhaved from my table, and which I faſtened up in one corner of my priſon, by ſupporting it in a ſmall niche I made in either wall, he often remained with me during the night, as well as the day, and ſometimes for four or five days ſucceſſively; and the pleaſure which, ſhut out as I was from all intercourſe with my own ſpecies, I enjoyed in the unreſtrained viſits of this little bird, was undeſcribably great.

"With the ſpring he again deſerted me,

and with the winter he again returned to my priſon; and thus, till the ſeventh year after his firſt viſiting me, did he continue to be my companion during the winter ſeaſon.

"It was one day, about the middle of the ſeventh winter, that he happened to ſtand ſleeping on his perch, with his head folded in the feathers of his wing, when the jailor entering with my breakfaſt, and obſerving him, darted acroſs the priſon, and, ere I could ſtop his cruel arm, ſeiſed my unconſcious favourite, and wrung his neck.

"Need I bluſh to own that the tears burſt into my eyes?

"I would have remonſtrated with the unfeeling wretch on his barbarity, had I not immediately conſidered that what I could

now ſay would be of no avail, but to gain me the deriſion of him who had deprived me of my only ſource of ſolace and amuſement; and I contented myſelf with requeſting him to give me the dead body.

"Without anſwering me, he aimed to throw it out of the window; but, miſſing his caſt, it fell back into the room; I ſprang forward to ſeize it, but he had ſnatched it up, and his ſecond aim being more ſucceſsful, it was gone for ever ere I reached the ſpot; I followed it with my eyes, and when it diſappeared, I ſtill ſtood gazing on the window.

"The ruthleſs jailor left the priſon in the ſilence in which he had entered it.

"I immediately placed the ſtool under

the window, and ſprang upon it, hoping I might find the body reſted on the outward frame of the window: but the hope was vain.

"I deſcended from the ſtool, and ſtanding with my arms folded in the middle of my priſon, reflection again led me to draw a compariſon between the preſent ſituation of myſelf and that of my lamented bird; and the only inference I could draw, from a long train of thought, I expreſſed in a ſhort exclamation, which I inſenſibly uttered aloud,—'Thou, little bird, art ſtill the happier.'

CHAP. XVII.

Seldom, when
The ſteeled jailor is the friend of men.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

"ANOTHER year paſſed in ſolitude like the former ones; and the ſpace of time I had now been impriſoned, in all ten years ſince my firſt being brought to the Baſtile, began to reconcile me from habit, to that ſtate which ſeemed to be marked out as the condition of my remaining life.

"No change had taken place in the treatment ſhown me, but that milk and thin wine were ſometimes brought me inſtead of water with my bread, and that

I was not now ſo frequently led out for air upon the platform as I had formerly been; being now ſeldom conducted thither above once in eight or nine days.

"About this time a man whom I had never before ſeen, brought me my morning and evening portion of proviſion, inſtead of the jailor who had been accuſtomed to attend me; he appeared to be about twenty-five years of age, tall, and ſtrongly built, but of a benign aſpect, that ſeemed ill to ſuit the office in which he ſerved.

"As he viſited me for ſeveral ſucceſſive days, and the mildneſs of his countenance encouraged me to addreſs him, I inquired whether he who had formerly attended me was dead.

"'Oh no!' he anſwered, and immediately left me, as fearing to ſay more; whilſt his features plainly ſhowed that it was not from want of inclination on his part, that our converſation had been ſo ſhort.

"I often endeavoured to tempt him into farther conference, but he could never be prevailed by me to utter more than one ſentence at a viſit. One day, however, when I aſked if he knew whether I was a priſoner for life, he caſt his eye to the door, as if to be aſſured no one was watching him, and then putting his face cloſe to mine, he ſaid haſtily, and in a low voice, 'Pray don't queſtion me again, but rely on my being your friend,' and again departed as precipitately as he had done on former occaſions.

"The firſt ray of hope, in the courſe of

ten tedious and painful years, now burſt upon my afflicted heart, and every nerve was ſtrained to form a conjecture how this youth could be intereſted in my welfare.

"Five months paſſed, and this youth ſtill viſited me; nor did I once behold him who had before attended me; but ſtill I perceived, from the conduct of my newly-declared friend, that no fit opportunity for conference was given us, for he always haſtened from my priſon as quickly as poſſible, ſeldom however forgetting to caſt at me a look of ſympathy, which ſerved to keep alive the feeble ſpark of hope he had lighted in my breaſt.

"One evening about this time, when he brought in my ſupper, he ſaid, in the ſame myſterious way he had always ſpoken to me

in, but apparently with greater ſigns of fear than he had ever before ſhown of being overheard, 'Don't go to ſleep to-night.' I obeyed his injunctions, and awaited with the greateſt impatience the hour that ſhould diſcloſe to me his meaning.

"The clock had juſt ſtruck two, when a perſon in an under voice at the grating of my window, which I immediately knew to be that of my new friend, ſaid '*Monſieur, monſieur!*'

"I felt for my ſtool, and placing it under the window, mounted upon it, and our faces then nearly meeting, he ſaid, 'If I ſhould contrive your eſcape from this place, and this kingdom, will you let me be your ſervant?'

" 'Say rather my friend,' I replied.

" 'Only ſay you won't let me ſtarve, *monſieur*.'

" 'No, by heaven!' I returned, forgetful how deſtitute I myſelf was of the means of ſubſiſtence.

" 'Enough ſaid,' he reſumed; 'then don't refuſe to drink any thing that is offered you; and leave the reſt to me.'

" 'Drink!' I repeated, but the young man was gone.

" I remained ſome minutes at the window, but he did not return, neither did I hear the fainteſt ſound. I then left my ſta-

tion, and throwing myſelf on my mattreſs, I began to ruminate on the words which I had juſt had addreſſed to me; and the only idea I could ſuffer myſelf to connect with the laſt ſentence the young man had uttered, was, that I was intended to be poiſoned.

"At an early hour in the morning, I heard my priſon door unlocked, and a friar entered; he commanded me to kneel by him, and having prayed that I might bear with fortitude the ſentence he was about to announce to me, he told me that I was condemned to die on that day.

"A few hours before, I ſhould have thought death the greateſt happineſs that could have befallen me; but now, with the faint hope of enlargement which my new friend had given me, prepared as I was to

receive this ſentence, and even tempted to believe that by his means I ſhould eſcape it, I felt an undeſcribable ſhock on its being firſt announced to me.

"I am inclined to think that the emotions which this intelligence produced in me, were to me of eſſential ſervice, for I am well convinced, that the ſudden change my countenance underwent was ſo great, as to have baffled the ſuſpicion of the prieſt, had he entertained any, of what had paſſed between me and the young jailor.

"He aſked my confeſſion. A ſecluſion of nearly eleven years from the world could have added no ſin of magnitude to my account of former miſdeeds, and of them I had made a confeſſion on the very morning on which I had firſt been brought to the Baſ-

tile; thus this taſk was quickly ended. He then again ordered me to kneel, and having prayed by me full two hours, he gave me his bleſſing, and departed.

"In a few minutes the governor, attended by two guards, and the young man in whom my laſt and only hope reſted, entered.

"Obeying the governor's orders, the young man poured from a phial which he had brought in his hand, a thick black liquor into a ſmall baſon, which the governor then took, and holding it out to me, commanded me to drink it, the two guards meanwhile levelling their bayonets at my breaſt, as a tacit threat in caſe of my refuſing the draught.

"I croſſed myſelf, and drank; the baſon fell from my hand, and I raiſed my eyes in

ſearch of my friend: he had left the priſon; the governor made a ſignal to the guards; they went out; he followed them; and I heard him turn the lock upon me.

"What a moment of horror was this! Uncertain whether or not I had ſwallowed the draught of death: if I had, how near the brink of eternity was I now ſtanding!—if I had not, how dreadful a fate might await both me and the young man, ſhould his ſtratagem fail!

"Within the courſe of an hour a faint ſickneſs ſeized me. I lay down upon my mattreſs, and pulled the blanket over me; an icy coldneſs ran through my veins, and big drops of perſpiration ſtarted on my forehead: in a ſhort time a heavineſs, which I could not ſtruggle againſt, weighed down

my eye-lids, and in leſs than two hours after my ſwallowing the draught, I ſunk into what I then thought the ſleep of death!"

Thus far had count Byroff proceeded in his narrative when the ſhepherd entering the room, informed him, that two men, who had ſeen his horſe in the ſtable, had declared they knew it, and inſiſted on coming into the cottage in ſearch of him, and that his ſon was then endeavouring to prevent their entrance.

The count raiſed his eyes in ſilence to Lauretta; they betrayed the wildeſt agitation and fear; Lauretta roſe from her ſeat, and threw herſelf upon her father's neck, and at the ſame inſtant the voices of Theodore and Kroonzer were heard by them in the adjoining apartment.

Count Byroff ſtarted up, and ſnatching his dagger from his ſide, prepared himſelf to meet their entrance into the chamber.

The chevalier was the firſt that appeared; the count made a dart at him, which he reſiſting, threw the count upon the floor, and treading on him with his left foot, drew his ſword, while he muttered curſes on him for a villain and a traitor.

Lauretta, inſtigated by the ſcene before her, caught his arm, and falling on her knees by the ſide of her father's body, ſhe exclaimed, "Here, in this boſom ſheath thy ſword; but ſpare, oh ſpare my father!"

Count Byroff's prayers and ſtruggles confirmed Theodore that Lauretta had truly named him her parent; and a momentary

ſurpriſe ſuſpended his power of action. This count Byroff perceived, and availing himſelf of the aſtoniſhment of his antagoniſt, by an inſtantaneous effort raiſed himſelf again on his feet, and dropping his dagger, made himſelf maſter of the ſword Theodore had juſt drawn. Kroonzer immediately drew his weapon, and ſpringing forward, preſented himſelf to oppoſe the count in defence of the chevalier, whilſt Lauretta, regardleſs of herſelf, her thoughts centred only in her father's ſafety, and almoſt made frantic by the danger in which ſhe now beheld him, ran without the cottage, piercing the air with her cries and calls for aſſiſtance.

Theodore was in an inſtant at her heels; and then firſt recollecting her own danger, on beholding herſelf ſo cloſely purſued by him ſhe moſt dreaded, ſhe flew to the young

cottager who was ſtanding without the cottage-door, and claſping his hand, ſhe cried out, "Oh! ſave me from him, I conjure you!"

The lad, who was ſtill ſtanding with the oaken ſtaff in his hand, with which he had endeavoured to repulſe the entrance of the chevalier and his accomplice, and ſtill panting from the unequal combat he had ſuſtained, moved either by the impulſe of humanity, or fired by the beauty of his intereſting ſuppliant, flew upon Theodore with the deſperation a wolf flies to the combat when attacked by a lion, and conſcious that he muſt either conquer or die.

For ſome moments the ſtruggle was maintained with equal valour and dexterity; but at length the ſuperior ſtrength of the

chevalier prevailing over that of his antagoniſt, Lauretta beheld her champion levelled with the ground; again ſhe ſhrieked, and again ſhe attempted to fly, but her trembling limbs could no longer ſupport her, and ſhe ſunk on the earth in a ſwoon.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.